



**Challenges of retaining staff in non-governmental  
organisations – the organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS in  
Lesotho**

by

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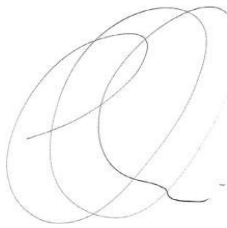
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**June 2021**

## DECLARATION

Student Number: 50296078

I declare that **Challenges of retaining staff in non-governmental organisations – the organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho** is my own work and that all sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....

SIGNATURE

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30 June 2021

DATE

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## **ABSTRACT**

Employees are an organisation's most valuable asset. Their significance to an organisation means that not only the best talent should be attracted but that they should also be retained for the long run. The purpose of this study was to explore the talent retention challenges faced by an HIV/AIDS testing organisation in Lesotho. The study intended to unearth the ideologies behind the high staff turnover in the organisation. The findings of the study indicated that the testing organisation in Lesotho should develop and implement effective policies, systems and strategies that would improve their level of talent retention. These findings can also apply to other non-governmental organisations.

An ethnographic qualitative research design and snowball sampling, using semi-structured interviews were utilised to collect data from the testing organisation staff. The study found that field workers in the testing organisation worked extensive hours with limited resources. In terms of decision-making policies, only senior officers were included in the decision-making processes. There was lack of support from management to aid employees to achieve their targets. While the benefits were satisfactory, staff found their salaries low and not competitive in the market. Moreover, management's lack of implementing training and development policies crippled the employees' career growth and talent. Most managers did not regard the testing organisation as an employer of choice.

**Keywords:** Employee retention, talent retention, non-governmental organisations, ethnographic research, Human Resource Management

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

The following abbreviations are used throughout the study:

HRM	Human Resource Management
HTS	HIV/AIDS testing services
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOPS	Ministry of Public Service
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
SR	Staff retention
VMMC	Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision

## **CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study intended to establish the challenges faced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in terms of human resource retention. Employees should be properly managed to maximise organisational efficiency and to ensure the optimal use of resources.

According to Armstrong (2009, p. 70), human resource management (HRM) is designed to maximise employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. Organisations have seen a paradigm shift away from 'human resource' to 'human capital', which comprises the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in the organisation, and which is indicative of their value. Human resource is referred to as the stock of productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labour.

The goal of HRM is to help an organisation to meet its strategic goals by attracting, and retaining employees, and to assist the organisation in managing its employees effectively to ensure that they deliver productive outputs. Human capital further refers to the intangible aspects of human resources. Human capital attempts to establish a win-win goal for employer and employee by focusing on the intrinsic value of employees, where their expenditure is perceived as an investment rather than an expense (Zakaria, Fadzilah & Yusoff, 2011, p. 48).

The human capital of an organisation consists of the people who work there, and on whom the success of the business depends (Armstrong, 2009, p. 70). Tettey (2006, p. 5) views employee retention as an important subject for inquiry by researchers. Retention is the converse of turnover that can be seen as the voluntary and involuntary separation between employee and employer (Harvard Business School Press, 2002). Retention can be described as the initiatives taken by management to prevent employees from leaving the organisation, such as rewarding them for performing their jobs effectively, ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers, and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment (Cascio, 2003).

Employees leaving their jobs is often a sign that something is wrong. Haider *et al.* (2015, p. 63) assert that increased competition in the market lead to high employee retention. It is crucial for organisations to remain relevant to the market, and such relevance can be achieved by hiring competent employees. In order to increase employee retention, such factors as a skilled workforce, economic growth, and employee turnover policies should be revised. It is difficult to measure the exact costs associated with turnover, as employees exiting the organisation take with them company information, clients, projects, past history, more often than not, to the competition (Haider *et al.*, 2015, p. 63).

All organisations face multiple challenges in retaining staff, whether non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit-making organisations, international organisations, the private or public sector. While there is no specific solution to employee retention, organisations can develop unique strategies to accomplish their mission towards retaining employees (Singh & Dixit, 2011).

The chapter presents the background to and motivation for the study. It formulates the problem statement and research questions, including the general and specific objectives of the study. The chapter also describes the research design and data-collection methods used in this study.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

As noted above, when employees leave their jobs, it may be because the employer did not address their needs. For organisations to remain competitive in the market, they need to employ competent employees. To increase employee retention factors, such as a skilled workforce and economic growth, the organisation should develop employee turnover policies (Haider *et al.*, 2015, p. 63). As stated previously, employees exiting take some company information, clients, projects and historical records with them, more often than not, to the competition (Haider *et al.*, 2015, p. 63). The next section examines the background of organisations, more especially, the NGOs and their role in Lesotho, where they have been operating.

### **1.2.1 Context of the study**

The context of the present study is an NGO that could be viewed as a global health network of more than 50 local organisations dedicated to improving the health of people in the developing world. Any such a conglomerate often focuses on serious challenges such as a lack of family planning, HIV and AIDS, barriers to maternal health, and the greatest threats to children under five, including malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition. The focal organisation works specifically with HIV/AIDS as the target group, including infants and women with the age range from 18 to 45, including pregnant mothers and men from 20 to 50 years, all of whom would be infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

With about 500 employees, the focal organisation takes its services to all ten (10) districts in Lesotho, and is named Door-Door testing. The organisation deploys hundreds of professional counsellors, nurses, and interpersonal communication agents to achieve its mission (Population Services International, Lesotho, 2017). The NGO is a donor-funded entity that works with donor aid to operate, and its major donor is The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States of America (USA) (Population Services International, Lesotho, 2017).

### **1.2.2 The context of Lesotho**

Lesotho is the country, which is also the context for this study, predominantly populated by the Southern African community known as the Basotho nation. The country was regarded as an appropriate environment for the research problem of this study. Lesotho is one of the Southern African countries, an enclave which is landlocked within the Republic of South Africa. Grouped mainly by the four geographical regions such as the Highlands, the Lowlands, Foot Hills and the Senqu Valley, Lesotho has 10 districts. Maseru as the capital city. Lesotho's natural resources include water, diamonds, agricultural and grazing land (Geography of Lesotho, 2016). However, economic growth in Lesotho remains relatively weak, unemployment continues to be one of the greatest challenges for the country, and HIV/AIDS continues to pose a huge political threat to the government (BTI, 2016).

Lesotho has come a long way in the regulation of the labour market. The Lesotho labour market has come a long way, since initially being regulated through Common Law and Master and Servant Act No.15 of 1856, which was designed to enforce

discipline on ex-slaves and the poor working class (Tlhoeli, 2016). Lesotho has developed programmes such as Promotion of Youth Employment to aid in the reduction of poverty in Lesotho. The overall objective of the Promotion of Youth Employment project is to create decent employment for youth, women and men, to promote social cohesion through pro-poor policies, and to increase the capacity of relevant national stakeholders in the development of policies and/or regulations that generate more and better jobs in sustainable enterprises (Morojele, 2009).

Furthermore, the government of Lesotho has identified challenges facing the health sector as crucial issues requiring staff retention reforms. Similar to other countries, the government of Lesotho has fully committed to the decade's global declaration by focusing on Human Resource for Health (HRH), and assigning a Senior Programme Officer to support the HR Department to develop a retention strategy proposal (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2010).

One of the priority HR interventions designed by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is the Retention Strategy, with the purpose of establishing mechanisms by which health professionals can be better managed, retained and motivated (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2010). To date, the government has focused only on the challenges of retention in the health sectors, leaving some entities, including employees, to fend for themselves and/or be exposed or unaccounted for.

### **1.2.3 Challenges facing employee retention in non-governmental Organisations**

Globally, the NGO sector is growing. According to Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 49), statistics indicate a 400% increase in the number of international NGOs. From a few hundred in the 1960s, the number had reached 50 000 by 1993 worldwide (Akeyo & Wezel, 2017, p. 49). In Lesotho, NGOs play a vital role in supporting government-initiated programmes. NGOs are efficient in service provision, especially health services, building schools, natural disaster aid, eradicating hunger and reducing the unemployment rate, especially amongst the newly graduated youth. Considering the degree to which the NGOs have been involved in the provision of education, the management of health care and delivery of social services, the government and NGOs have doubtlessly found ways of working together (Fox & Fisher, 1993).

The profile of NGOs in the developing world has increased drastically over the past decades. With the NGOs having made a significant impact on many societies in the past decades, they have become the focal point, and are associated with eradicating poverty, both locally and internationally (Akeyo & Wezel, 2017, p. 49). The NGOs have also been actively engaged in keeping governments accountable by challenging any efforts that are seen to oppose or contravene world peace, good governance, innovation, entrepreneurial and transparency measures to serve its people. A good example is the USAID, an NGO that has provided the Lesotho government with financial aid intended to help the Independent Electoral Commission to run fair and transparent elections in the country. This reduces corruption and other socio-economic elements which, otherwise, might not have been avoided.

According to Sinha and Sinha (2012, p. 145), employee retention issues are emerging as the most critical workforce management challenge of the immediate future, especially in the non-governmental sector. It would be futile for NGOs to exist outside of the societal needs, or to push their own agendas and ignore the needs and concerns of the societies in which they operate. Being innovative, creative and flexible, the future of NGOs depends on their capacity to adapt to the current work environment (Sinha & Sinha, 2012, p. 145). In fact, the dynamics of the work environment could reflect a diverse population comprised of individuals whose motivations, beliefs and value structures differ vastly from the past and from one another (Sinha & Sinha, 2012, p. 145).

Blake (2007, p. 3) presents the most common reasons why retention efforts by companies fail, despite being implemented by capable people:

- No assessment, so ineffective solutions are chosen. In their hurry to correct a costly problem, companies often forgo conducting a relatively brief and cost-efficient assessment to correct situations faster.
- Implementing too many solutions, rather than the most effective solutions.
- Managers often brainstorm a number of plausible solutions, though especially implementing mainly those favoured by top management.

Fukofuka (2014, p. 1) maintains that the retention of key employees is still a challenge. Factors, such as excessive workload, job stress, accountability requirements and financial uncertainties, have contributed to both profit- and non-profit-making organisations struggling to hold on to their skilled employees. As Fukofuka (2014, p. 1) suggests, employees should be bound by a mission attachment. While the mission statement of an organisation is a declaration of reasons why an organisation exists as well as stating its purpose, Brown and Yashioka (2003), cited in Fukofuka, 2014, p. 1) view the mission attachment as the fit between employees and the organisational mission as observed in its mission statement.

Mission attachments have been studied in terms of retention in not-for-profit organisations. It was found that employees are tied to their organisations based on the fit between the employees and the organisational mission. In other words, employees are retained by organisations not so much because of benefits acquired from such organisations, but rather that the employees are attached to the mission of the organisation. Therefore, it can be argued that if employees are attached to the mission of the organisation, the organisation has a better chance of retaining such employees (Fukofuka, 2014, p. 2).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The desired critical measures for the retention of employees have become a strategic matter in the sustainable competition amongst organisations in a globalising economy, such as in Lesotho. The focal HIV/AIDS testing organisation in Lesotho has continuously faced staff retention challenges, with a turnover rate of 27% in the last two years (Population Services International - Lesotho Staff Records, 2017).

Many studies have been conducted to discover the determinants of high staff turnover in organisations. The methods and strategies are not generic to all organisations, therefore it is critical for the focal organisation to develop a retention plan to defeat the challenges that exist. If the challenges are not addressed, the organisation is probably going to lose not only human resources, but also financial resources due to new recruitments, and the selection and training of new staff. In addition, the existing staff might find themselves demotivated due to the continuing



recruitment, lack of organisational commitment, boredom from doing routine work and poor job performance.

Moreover, if targets are not met, the donors will see no need to invest in the organisation which might lead to major retrenchments or closure. If the focal organisation has to close as an NGO, almost 500 employees would lose their jobs, thereby contributing to the already high rate of unemployment, and inevitably affecting the ailing economy of Lesotho. Similarly, the stakeholders of the organisation would be distressed without access to the free HIV/AIDS services provided by the organisation. In the end, such a record would affect the world of NGOs and the country, both economically and socially.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the challenges facing staff retention in an organisation testing HIV/AIDS in Lesotho.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were formulated for the current study:

- What are the perceptions of the employees on staff retention in the organisation?
- What are the perceptions of the management on the retention of staff in the organisation?
- What recommendations can be made to human resource management on improving the retention of staff in the organisation?

##### **General research question**

How can the challenges experienced regarding staff retention in an organisation testing HIV/AIDS in Lesotho be described?

#### **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives were formulated for the current study:

- To explore the descriptions of the challenges experienced regarding staff retention in an organisation testing HIV/AIDS in Lesotho

- To determine how the organisation's employees perceive retention at the organisation.
- To investigate how the management perceive retention within the organisation.
- To make recommendations on improving staff retention to the human resource management of the organisation.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

According to Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 51), most researchers have investigated possible antecedents or determinants of employees' intentions to quit their jobs. To date, there has been little consistency in the findings, which is partly due to the diversity of techniques employed by researchers. This paucity serves as motivation for an empirical study on the phenomena.

Moreover, in terms of policy programming, the only proximate effort made in this area, specific to a case study in Lesotho, is the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Report (2010) which was intended to unearth the pull-and-push factors pertaining to staff retention in the country's health sector. Although the findings of this report are relevant, they are dated in terms of providing timeous data many issues related to the health sector, including the operations of the main development partners of the government, more especially the NGOs.

The study aimed to identify the determinants of employee retention challenges that the HIV/AIDS testing organisation in Lesotho is facing. In identifying these challenges, the study hopes to develop and implement strategies that would improve its retention levels. The study would further contribute to the NGO context in Lesotho, specifically in the health sector, with an effective retention plan that would sustain organisations. It is the intention of the study to also challenge the Lesotho retention policy in the government sector, specifically in the health department, to adopt efficient policies and processes that would enable and grow the presiding retention strategy.

## **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Research designs are the various types of inquiry within the qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches, which provide a specific direction for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2014). There are many ways to classify research designs, but sometimes the distinction is artificial, and at other times, different designs are combined. A research design is a systematic plan to study a scientific problem. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p. 78) argue that the structures and execution of a research study can be done in a variety of different ways, depending on the specific research design used, including experimental, quasi-experimental, non-experimental and qualitative designs.

The section below presents a discussion of qualitative and ethnographic research.

### **1.8.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research explores and understands the meanings ascribed by individuals or groups to social or human problems. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, and the data are typically collected in the participants' setting. The data analysis inductively builds from particular to general themes, and the researcher interprets the meanings of such data (Creswell, 2014). Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006, p. 47) see qualitative methods as allowing researchers to study selected issues in-depth, in an open and detailed manner, so as to identify and attempt to understand the categories of information emerging from the data.

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research approach was used to identify the challenges facing staff retention in an organisation. The study would thus help the researcher to comprehend the context of the existing challenges facing this particular NGO as a health services provider. As such, as a donor-driven organisation, the NGO would have their perspectives recorded, as derived from the environment in which they operate. Following the data-collection process, the data were analysed systematically and then interpreted, with the recommendations finally made and conclusions drawn and presented for the attention of the organisation.

### **1.8.2 Ethnographic research**

According to Creswell (2007, p. 68), an ethnographer focuses on a cultural group. The group may be small, but typically it would be a fairly large group, involving many

people who interact over a period of time. It is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviour, beliefs and language of the group.

As a process, ethnography involves extended observations of the group, most often through participant observations, having the researcher immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people being observed and interviewed, sometimes as group participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 69). Welman *et al.* (2005, p. 193) state that the primary task of ethnographic research is to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and manage their situations, problems and difficulties that they encounter.

Following this approach, the current study uncovered the challenges of staff retention within the setting of the organisation.

### **1.8.3 Data-collection techniques**

Data-collection techniques allow researchers to systematically collect information about the phenomena under study (for example, people and objects) and about the settings in which they occur (Rakotsoane & Rakotsoane, 2007, p. 20). Creswell (2009, p. 178) adds that the data-collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, documents and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. A systematic data-collection approach comprising various data-collection methods was used, as discussed in detail below.

#### *1.8.3.1 Interviews*

Interviews consist of collecting data by asking questions. For this study, the data were collected by listening to individuals, recording their voices, and observing their non-verbal responses with the following combination of methods. According to Abawi (2013), there are three types of interviews as described below:

- **Structured interviews:** Welman *et al.* (2005, p. 167) state that the interviewer puts a collection of questions from a previously compiled questionnaire, known as an interview schedule, to a respondent in a face-to-face interview, while recording the latter's responses. The interviewer strictly uses the questions, their wording

and the order in which they appear on the schedule, with relatively little freedom to deviate from it (Welman *et al.*, 2005, p. 165).

- **Semi-structured interviews:** The interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 87). The researcher has a list of key themes, issues and questions to be covered. In this type of interview, the order of the questions can be changed, depending on the direction of the interview (Abawi, 2013).
- **Focus-group discussions:** According to Krueger (2002, p. 1), such an interview involves participants that have been carefully recruited; usually about 5-10 members with more or less similar characteristics per group. Abawi (2013) suggests that the purpose and the participants of the discussion should be identified before the discussion. Afterwards, the questions are developed, with the follow-up being made with the focus group.

This study used semi-structured interviews, as the key theme had been set and the issues found as stipulated in the problem statement. This approach allowed the researcher to be flexible in engaging the selected participants while using an interview guide. Such an approach gave the researcher the opportunity to slightly deviate from the set questions, if and when necessary, in further probing the participants so as to address the objectives of the study.

#### *1.8.3.2 Documentary sources*

Maree (2009, p. 83) states that in selecting documents to be included in the study, the following should be verified: the type of documents dealt with (primary or secondary sources), publication date, the purpose of the document, and the research methodology used in producing the document. There are two sources of data, namely, primary and secondary data. Generally speaking, primary sources are those data which are not published and which the researcher has gathered from people and organisations directly, while secondary sources are any materials (books and articles) which have been previously published (Rakotsoane & Rakotsoane, 2007, p. 21). The study used both sources of data.

Documentation were collected and reviewed from different perspectives, in order to identify the gaps and challenges facing the organisation in retaining its employees.

The employees, the organisation and the environment in which they each operate were also reviewed. As such, the selected documents included the following: the organisation's HR handbook, the organisational policies and national staff retention policies. All these organisational records were accessed and used after approval had been obtained from the organisational authorities.

#### *1.8.3.3 Sampling*

Sampling refers to the selection of a subset of persons or things from a larger population, also known as a sampling frame, with the intention of representing a particular population (Scott & Morrison, 2007, p. 219). According to Bryman (2004, p. 304), sampling in ethnographic research is frequently a mixture of convenience and snowball sampling. Rakotsoane and Rakotsoane (2007, p. 27) explain snowball sampling as an approach where the researcher mainly picks people for an interview who are likely to put the researcher in contact with other likely interviewees or respondents so as to be able to gather an essential number of participants.

For the purpose of the current study, the organisation's employees were divided into three groups, in accordance with their respective departments, namely:

- Technical services: human resources, interpersonal communication and condom distribution, research and measurement, and evaluation;
- Programmes department: HIV/AIDS testing services (HTS), voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC), and
- Corporate services: finance, procurement, administration, fleet and warehouse.

Five employees from each department were purposefully chosen to be interviewed for the study. For further in-depth research, three employees from the management team were randomly chosen for interviews. The participants were, therefore, purposefully chosen so as to be representative of every department within the organisation.

#### *1.8.3.4 Data analysis*

The data analysis process follows after the data have been collected, and allows the researcher to make sense of the data and make specific findings (Field, 2009). Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 150) describe data analysis as the process of

bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is described as messy, ambiguous and time-consuming, but also as a creative and fascinating process (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150). Maree (2007, p.101) describes five data analysis strategies:

- **Hermeneutics:** As a philosophical approach to human understanding, hermeneutics provides the philosophical grounding for interpretivism, thus suggesting ways of understanding textual data.
- **Content analysis:** It is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarises the content of such materials as books, brochures, written documents, news reports, transcripts and visual media.
- **Conversation analysis:** This generally studies a talk in interaction, and attempts to describe the orderliness, structures and sequential patterns of an interaction, whether an institutional or a casual conversation.
- **Discourse analysis:** This term refers to self-expressing using words and a variety of and/or flexible language in ways which are peculiar to an ordinary interaction.
- **Narrative analysis:** It refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting (making meaning) of the narratives generated in research.

Qualitative data analysis was used after the data-collection process was completed. Similar to content analysis, thematic analysis was selected for this study due to its close attention to the qualitative aspects of the material being analysed (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p. 1). The analysis thus included organisational documentation, such as staff records, HR handbook, semi-structured interviews and national staff retention policies.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study is underlined by the ethical guidelines and standards as stipulated by the University of South Africa (UNISA). Researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants used for research purposes is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorised access as required by Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013.

Striving towards honesty, fairness and transparency, the study used the Population Services International - Lesotho consent form so as to conduct the research on its employees. The oath of the confidentiality form was then signed between the organisation and the researcher in accordance with the human resource manual. The study further observed the ethical principles of the University of South Africa (see Annexure A for the Ethical Clearance Certificate). Cast within the framework of the concepts of essentiality and relevance, such principles revolved around the following:

- Maximisation of public interest and of social justice;
- Competence, ability and commitment to research;
- Respect for and protection of the rights and interests of participants and institutions;
- Informed and non-coerced consent;
- Respect for cultural differences;
- Justice, fairness and objectivity;
- Integrity, transparency and accountability;
- Risk minimisation; and
- Non-exploitation.

## **1.10 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 presented The background to and motivation for the study, the problem statement and research questions, and the general and specific objectives of the study. Also presented in the chapter were the research design and data-collection methods used for this study.

Chapter 2 reviews both the theoretical and empirical literature on staff retention as related to this study.

Chapter 3 examines the research design and methodology adopted in this study.

Chapter 4 presents the data collected for the study, which is then analysed and discussed.



Chapter 5 summarises the main findings, thereby drawing conclusions of the study. The chapter will further discuss some limitations, contributions and the recommendations made by the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, a number of reasons have been identified that explain why employee retention may be seen as a challenge to many organisations. These reasons may include external and internal factors that influence employees' retention (Hassan, Hassan, Khan & Akram Naseem, 2011, p. 9). This chapter reviews the theories and literature related to employee retention in organisations.

### **2.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING RETENTION**

According to Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 52), in an attempt at establishing people's intentions about their jobs, many researchers have investigated possible reasons for employees quitting. To date, despite the diverse techniques used to investigate this phenomenon, there has been little consistency in the findings. While there might be reasons why people move from one organisation to another, or why people leave the organisation for which they work, the studies which the researcher has reviewed to date have not addressed this research problem, more especially in the context of Lesotho. This section reviews the literature on staff retention measures in different organisations and environments.

#### **2.2.1 Psychological work environment**

From the psychological perspective, Reiner (2018, p. 2) examines ways in which individuals experience and respond to their surroundings. Briner (2000, p.300) states that the psychological environment can be considered as the relevant features of the work environment in relation to workers' behaviour (attitudes, perception, decision-making, emotions, moods, effectiveness, absence and motivation). Therefore, it can be stated that the psychological environment is characterised by a work environment that affects workers' feelings, thinking and behaviour (Briner, 2000, p. 300).

Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 52) see a positive environment as essential to retain employees. Therefore, it is important to identify the elements in the workplace that make employees appreciate and remain committed to their workplace. A psychological work environment should further be considered when employees are under pressure to perform and have to cope with the workload and decisions that

have to be made. Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 52) have shown that a conducive working environment increases work satisfaction, attendance and productivity.

Sinha and Sinha (2012, p. 146) maintain that it is a complex process to keep employees with an organisation. Furthermore, retention is driven by several key factors, which include an organisation's environment. The mergers and acquisitions in the work environment also leave employees dissatisfied and insecure, thus pushing them to look for employment elsewhere (Sinha & Sinha, 2012, p. 146). Furthermore, Firth *et al.* (2004, p. 6) indicate that employees who experience job-related stress (job stress), lack of commitment to the organisation, and job dissatisfaction are more inclined to quit.

### **2.2.2 Recruitment, training and development**

Recruitment, training and development are also crucial to staff retention in organisations. Recruitment is the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs with an organisation (Gusdorf, 2008, p. 1). The field of employee recruitment, selection and assessment has traditionally been one of the most energetic and active domains because of their external and internal engagement with staff and potential staff.

Janjua and Gulzar (2014) observe that fair recruitment significantly affects employee retention (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016, p. 378). Furthermore, hiring the right people for the right positions is an important factor in organisations' efforts to improve employee retention. However, Liang's (2013, p.22) study found that most people are not staying in the right positions, which means that inept employees lead to inept organisations. The rate of employee turnover, profitability, customer satisfaction and the extent to which a particular job matches the employees, are influenced by the processes of employee selection and placement.

Gering and Conner (2002, p. 42) note that to reduce turnover, managers should show a genuine interest in their employees' development and success. Training has a direct relationship with employee retention (Villegas, 2006, cited in Hassan *et al.*, 2013, p. 18). Employees feel that they are cared for and their careers are regarded as important when the organisation takes them through training; they want to feel that their contributions to the business point directly to the stated corporate values.

Today's business environment has become very competitive, thus making skilled employees the major differentiating factor for most organisations, both in the public and private sectors (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009, p. 410). Gering and Conner (2002, p. 42) conclude that employees should be rewarded for their achievements and provided with the opportunity to advance their careers.

According to Maimuna, Nda and Yazdanifard (2013, p. 92) training is invaluable in increasing the productivity of organisations. It not only helps employees with resources, but it also provides them with the opportunity to learn their jobs and perform more competently. As such, it enhances the productivity of both employees and organisations. As a process, training is one of the most pervasive methods of enhancing the productivity of individuals and communicating organisational goals to personnel (Maimuna, *et al*, 2013, p. 92). Similarly, Rohan and Madhumita (2012) maintain that investing in training employees on decision-making, teamwork, problem-solving and interpersonal relations has a positive impact on the organisations' growth and employee performance.

Gering and Conner (2002, p. 40) report on the best practices adopted by employers towards retaining their employees and treating them like their most valued assets. Regardless of organisations' efforts to train managers, compensation plans, increased benefits to retain talent, health care organisations continue to sustain high turnover rates. Gering and Conner (2002, p. 40) explain that health care organisations make considerable efforts in marketing their facilities to patients and physicians; the same efforts should be directed at attracting and retaining employees. Any organisation which keeps on training and offering certain benefits not only attracts the best talent and/or employees of a good calibre, but it also has an advantage of being one of the most popular employers or organisations.

### **2.2.3 Compensation and reward systems**

Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 88) state that employees in the new era sell their knowledge and dedication to organisations providing attractive or competitive staff retention benefits. Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 89) argue that organisations cannot develop employee growth where employees are under-paid and unmotivated, as this causes a gap between the employees' input and their rewards for their efforts. Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p. 414) add that employees, especially those with self-

esteem and self-actualisation drives, are not necessarily interested in monetary rewards but thrive from the recognition of their contributions towards organisational goals and objectives. Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 89) view non-cash motivators as likely to be more effective in the longer term than financial incentives.

Money may be regarded as a powerful motivating force because it is linked directly or indirectly to the satisfaction of many needs, such that it can have an immediate and powerful effect, although not necessarily a long-lasting effect (Armstrong, 2009, p. 191). Money can, therefore, act as a motivator in the right circumstances, but the pay systems should be designed properly and be perceived as fair and equitable. Different types of rewards serve to enhance the satisfaction and retention of staff in the long run (Bakuwa, Chasimpha, & Masamba, 2013, p. 171).

#### **2.2.4 People-focused strategies**

Many practical people-focused strategies can increase employee retention and engagement by employers (Aguenza & Som (2012, p. 89). For growth purposes, the organisation's people-focused strategies should project their mission, vision, culture, objectives and values, and align them with employees' expectations. As Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 92) further state, the design of a retention policy should include regular evaluation of employee performance. Moreover, organisations should implement flexible programmes so as to improve employee performance and influence employees to stay with the organisation.

#### **2.2.5 Employee demographics**

One of the factors contributing to retention is position tenure, which means that the longer an employee has been working in a company, the lower the chances of him or her leaving, regardless of the demographics (Muir & Li, 2014). Therefore, the organisation's retention efforts should be aimed at newer employees across all demographic spreads. However, Muir and Li (2014) believe that minorities and women often occupy low-tenure positions, as opposed to white males who are in higher tenured positions. These low-tenure positions are associated with poor mentoring and meaningless assignments. However, considering race issues, Muir and Li (2014) also found that retention is also lower for minority groups than for white employees. In Lesotho, retention is low for women as they juggle work-life balance.

The ability to attract and retain women has become a challenge due to under-representation and gender equality (Devar, 2017, p. 6).

The concept of a 'talent and competency war' came into existence in the new millennium, which witnessed the occurrence of rare talents and skills, and permanent competition between entities to acquire it. Strategies related to the retention of talented and competent employees are based on the realisation of some factors, including employee age groups and interest groups. Young employees (under the age of 30) are attracted to a work environment that provides opportunities for career development. Employees between 30 and 50 years old focus on the ability to manage their professional life and enjoy a high level of job satisfaction. As for the employees above 50 years old, they focus on job security and planning for retirement (Federal Authority for Government Human Resources, 2017, p. 34). A study by Ahuja *et al.* (2007) found that age had a modest but significant effect on turnover intention and that there were different perceptions regarding job satisfaction and motivation across the age spectrum. In Ahuja *et al.*'s (2007) separate studies on the retention of health care professionals, they found that younger nurses had lower levels of job satisfaction, while the older age group of 40 and above had higher levels of job satisfaction.

The factors influencing employee retention can also be divided into individual and organisational factors. Individual factors could include gender, marital status and education, amongst others. According to Sicherman (1996, cited in Nyanjom, 2013, p. 4), women are often considered less valuable with regard to human capital than their male counterparts because they are more likely to face interrupted careers due to family considerations and other issues such as sexual harassment. Married people more often make job decisions based on relatively complicated concerns, including kinship responsibility and children issues (Glass & Riley, 1998). Such concerns may result in them holding onto their jobs longer than unmarried people. Also noted is that education is related to turnover, as it impacts on the number of job openings available to workers, including any turnover costs incurred (Barnes & Jones, 1974, as cited in Nyanjom, 2013, p. 4).

### **2.2.6 Job levels and performance**

Muir and Li (2014) determine retention factors be subject to job levels or specifications, as each holds a different psychological contract with the organisation. For example, hourly workers are more likely to cite transactional retention factors than workers at higher job levels, who are more likely to cite relational retention factors. Muir and Li (2014) also state that it is important to understand how companies can best retain high performers, as high performers are most likely to possess the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for the overall success of the organisation. However, retaining all the employees may not be the desire of every business. Most organisations are more concerned with retaining the high performers that possess rare irreplaceable skills and knowledge essential for the organisation (Ahmed & Azumah, 2012).

### **2.2.7 Employee engagement systems**

According to Budriene and Diskiene (2020, p. 42), employee engagement implies the emergence of motivation, and the active par

ticipation and involvement of workers in all production processes, which should favourably influence the growth of labour efficiency. People work effectively only if they are passionate about their work. To achieve this, it is necessary to create conditions that nurture the maximum interest of employees in their work. It is believed that the employee's satisfaction with work results in loyalty to the employer, and loyalty forms engagement, which, in turn, allows for improvement in the quality of products (Budriene & Diskiene, 2020, p. 42). Storey, Uhlich, Welbourne and Wright (2008, p. 301) assert that when employees experience engagement or commitment, a number of positive outcomes occur. Some of the outcomes of engagement are linked to other employee affective responses to work. In addition, employee engagement has also been found to be related to less role conflict, stress and cynicism about the organisation and its goals.

### **2.2.8 Retention costs**

Gering and Conner (2002, p. 41) add that retention costs include search-firm fees, training, severance, sign-on bonuses, recruitment and interview time and legal costs.

After turnover costs have been determined, the financial benefits of reducing these costs become apparent. Furthermore, in the health care environment, a reduction in high employee turnover can lead to improved patient care. Long-term employees gain considerable experience in patient care. The longer employees remain with an organisation, the greater the potential benefit to patients. Studies in the USA have shown that over the past 10 years, the average company has reportedly been losing about \$100,000 for every professional or managerial employee that has left (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008, as cited in Nyanjom, 2013, p. 17).

According to Sandhya and Kumar (2011, p. 1778), it is difficult to calculate turnover costs, which include hiring costs, training costs and productivity loss. In this regard, industry experts often quote 25% of the average employee salary as a conservative estimate. Replacing a manager would cost an organisation approximately two times the person's earnings (Surji, 2013, p. 54). Furthermore, the investigation indicated that devoting time to building employees' confidence and morale would presumably result in improved profits and savings on training and recruitment. Retention is important for reducing the turnover costs and/or to avoid any costs incurred by a company in terms of new recruitment and training. It is clear that employee retention is important, more especially with regard to talented employees that would be in danger of getting poached by other organisations (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011, p. 1778).

Interestingly, research has estimated that a 10% reduction in employee turnover is worth more money than a 10% increase in productivity, or a 10% increase in sales (Blake, 2007, p. 4). Organisations that are inflexible, or whose organisational culture is characterised by domination and autocracy are likely to have dissatisfied employees, no matter how good the incentives to stay may be (Dalton & Todor, 1979). At the very least, the tenure of their employees is likely to be highly sensitive to changes in specific incentives, for example, small changes in compensation may lead to many employees leaving. These employees are susceptible to more generous compensation or benefits package offered elsewhere and concerns about the future of the organisation.

It is important to note that some de-motivators can occur at the best of organisations, or can result from forces which originate beyond the organisation itself. For example,



a particular job description involves many repetitive and boring tasks, and this may not necessarily be the result of indifference on the part of the employer, but could rather be inherent to the type of job. It is crucial for organisations to realise that employees are often pulled away from some organisations or industries to other more generous industries or segments of the market with more lucrative offers as part of the company's operations (Ghansah, 2011, p. 21).

Jørgensen (n.d. p. 2) states that organisations invest a great deal of time, effort and money in hiring employees. This includes placing advertisements for job vacancies, paying the recruiter, time and effort spent on conducting interviews and selection. In addition, when employees first join organisations, they are not as productive because they are not familiar with the systems and procedures of the new job, and it takes some months for the employee to become used to the work environment.

The discussion thus far does not consider any possible gaps in the knowledge of the employee relating to the technology and skill sets required for the job. If this should be the case, it is costly to train employees. Studies have suggested that the cost of employee turnover often ranges from 50% to 200% of an employee's annual salary, based on the type and level of job held (World at Work, 2012, cited in Msengeti & Obwogi, 2015, p. 2).

### **2.2.9 Talent and performance**

Organisations should attract the best talent and the organisation should be regarded as the 'best place to work' (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011, p. 40). Job satisfaction is something that working people seek, and is a key element of employee retention, which can only be achieved by making the employee feel comfortable, physically and psychologically.

Berry and Morris (2006, p. 2) explain retention as a continuation of workers' employment, particularly high calibre and productive workers. It has been noted that in companies hiring and retaining quality employees, the senior management definitely shape the future of the business (Azeez, 2017, p. 3). The question of employee retention becomes significant for organisations, specifically in cases of high potential staff that have the potential to take on higher responsibilities in future,

as it takes a considerable time to reach the higher position (Dries & Pepermans, 2007a, cited in Sarmad, 2016, p. 176).

The long-term health and success of any organisation depends on the retention of key employees. To a great extent, customer satisfaction, organisational performance in terms of increased sales, satisfied colleagues and reporting staff, as well as effective succession planning depend on the ability to retain the best employees in any organisation (Azeez, 2017, p. 8).

Blake (2007, p. 3) states that the best way of retaining employees, especially the most valuable ones, is by firstly, ranking employees in three categories as: best performers, middle performers and the lowest performers. The objective is to retain top performers; develop and retain middle performers, turning them into near-top or top performers if possible; and potentially replacing the lowest performers. Secondly, there should be an internal agreement on the measures to be used to calculate turnover costs. Thirdly, top management should receive reports of turnover costs on a monthly, a quarterly and an annual basis. When turnover costs are unacceptably high or higher than the industry's average, the situation should be assessed. There is a need to know if it is top, middle or lowest performers who are leaving. As stated by Blake (2007), differing strategies related to employment and/or a pay would come into play if top performers voluntarily leave, compared to middle- or lowest-level performers. Solutions should be developed to address the problems uncovered, though only a limited number should be implemented. Success should be measured and retention efforts refined.

Hassan *et al.* (2011, p. 10) state that the challenge of finding, attracting, developing and retaining the right talent is a major element of management, and once the right talent is found, the next job is to retain that talent. Furthermore, appealing to existing employees through employee development or talent management programmes is more cost-effective than attracting new employees (Sinha & Sinha, 2012, p. 147). Sinha and Sinha (2012, p. 147) further assert that satisfied employees become devoted to their jobs, pursue customers' satisfaction and look forward to growing the organisation. Employees who are satisfied have higher intentions of persisting with their organisation, thus decreasing the turnover rate.

### **2.2.10 Retention strategies summarised**

The current study maintains that when designing retention strategies management should consider various factors that staff would value to motivate them to remain in the organisation. Nyanjom (2013, p. 3) asserts that managers should make serious efforts to focus on the intangible rewards. The employer's management style, learning and development opportunities, their quality of working life and attractiveness possibly create an employer's brand. Such intangible rewards would create a sense of psychological satisfaction amongst staff, with the money as one of the most important components of any retention strategy (Nyanjom, 2013, p. 3).

## **2.3 THEORIES RELATED TO RETENTION**

This section presents the principal theories that will be utilised as conceptual frameworks to explain specific aspects of staff retention. For the purpose of this study, motivation will be used as a retention strategy. Motivation plays an important role in employee satisfaction, and eventually, employee performance. According to the current study, analysing and fulfilling employee needs would help organisations to achieve their goals. Similarly, Sandhy and Kumar (2011, p. 1778) argue that employee motivation is one of the important factors which influence employee and organisational performance. Khan and Kumar (2013, p. 67) state that the presence of qualified and motivated employees is essential. Friedman (2007, p. 37) adds by stating it is a challenge to deal with pay and incentives, and it is an aspect of the international health agenda on how to retain employees.

Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 50) claim that many contemporary authors have defined the concept of motivation as the psychological process which gives behavioural purpose and direction, and creates a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs. It is an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need, and the will to achieve. Gupta (2005) conceptualises motivation as a process of steering a person's inner drives and actions towards certain goals, and committing his energies to achieving the goals. Rue (2003) sees motivation as coming from the Latin word 'movere', which means to move. Motivation is concerned with that which activates human behaviour, that directs this behaviour to a particular point, and how this behaviour is sustained.

The motivation theory puts forth factors which affect goal-directed behaviour, stating how HRM enhances people's commitment to their work to enable the organisation to achieve high-level performance (Armstrong, 2014, p. 7). The main concern of any organisation is to attract, capacitate, engage and retain the right employees. Certain factors are crucial in influencing the employees' decision to either leave or remain in an organisation. Through employee motivation, the employer can encourage the employees by enhancing their skills and improving their morale (Sanhya & Kumar, 2014, p. 1779).

As Luthans (1998) points out, motivation is the process that arouses, energises, directs and sustains behaviour and performance (Coldwell & Perumal, 2007, p. 203). In other words, it is the process of stimulating people to action and to achieving a desired task, and the extent to which a person is gratified or fulfilled by his or her work. Robbins (1993) explains that motivation can be understood as when people are willing to exert high levels of effort towards organisational goals, but the prerequisite for such efforts should meet their individual needs (Liang, 2013, p. 23). According to Liang (2013, p. 23), the 'needs' here can be seen as the internal state so that some results appear attractive and unsatisfied needs may create tension within an individual.

Liang (2013, p. 23) states that employees who are motivated should know how to relieve any tension arising so as to exert an effort on meeting their particular goals. In other words, motivation may impact on employee commitment to the organisation, thus also enhancing employee retention. Motivated employees are a valuable asset for an organisation, thereby strengthening the business and revenue growth. Motivation is effective if the right person with suitable skills is made responsible for the job; otherwise, resources such as time would be wasted, leading to job dissatisfaction (Mihai, 2014, 1061). Human behaviour is determined by motivating factors, resulting in their performance, coupled with their practical abilities.

Mihai (2014, p. 248) suggests that employees may be motivated by intrinsic motivation, that is, the feeling that work is important and that one has control over one's own resources. It also includes freedom to act, to choose the goals and to develop one's goals. However, on the contrary, interesting and stimulating risks, promotion and development opportunities and extrinsic motivation come from

outside. As such, incentives include raising salaries, recognising one's work, promoting or sanctioning salary cuts and criticisms, which all exemplify negative motivation.

For the purpose of this study, motivation is anything which urges an employee to reach the expected outcomes of the workplace, which includes staying with the organisation for a longer period of time.

To enable a better understanding of the concept of motivation, the section below presents a discussion of various motivation theories. These include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg two-factor theory, equity theory, expectancy theory, organisational culture and psychological contract.

### **2.3.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

According to Venugopalan (2007, p. 62), Maslow's theory of Need Hierarchy is considered to be the first and foremost content theory of motivation. Abraham H. Maslow, therefore, developed a dynamic and realistic explanation of human behaviour. The underlying concept of motivation is some driving force within individuals by which they attempt to achieve some goals in order to satisfy some need or expectation in life. Specifically, Maslow theorised people as having five types of needs that should be activated hierarchically. For him, these needs are aroused in a specific order from the lowest to the highest, such that the lowest-order need must be fulfilled before the next order need is triggered, also seeing such a process as continuing (Kaur, 2013, p. 1062).

Motivation theorists believe that an organisation can retain its best brains by implementing strategies which motivate them. This theory is rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943, p. 1). These needs can be divided into two categories: basic needs (psychological and safety) and strategic needs (belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation). Kaur (2013, p. 1062) briefly summarises the needs as follows:

- **Physiological needs:** These needs lie at the bottom of the triangle, that is the lowest-order and most basic needs. They include the need to satisfy the fundamental biological drives, such as food, air, water and shelter. According to Maslow, organisations should provide employees with a salary to enable them to

afford adequate living conditions. The organisations that successfully attract and retain key employees offer high compensation packages (Nwokocha, 2012, p. 203).

- **Safety needs:** These occupy the second level of needs and are activated after the physiological needs have been met. Safety needs refer to the need for a secure working environment, free from any threats or harm. The rationale is that employees working in an environment free of harm do their jobs without fear of harm. Environmental factors influencing the effectiveness of different organisational systems include environmental changes and uncertainty. From the contingency perspective, stable environments suggest mechanistic structures that emphasise centralisation, formalisation, standardisation and specialisation to achieve efficiency and consistency (Hisson, 2009, p. 11).
- **Social needs:** These third-level needs are activated after safety needs have been met. These are mental needs referring to the need to be affiliated, and are related to people's need to be loved and accepted by other people. To meet these needs, organisations encourage employees' participation in social events, such as picnics. Satisfactory relationships with colleagues or fellow employees is identified as a retention factor. Identifying and catering for employees' individual needs provides a favourable work environment that increases their commitment (Kossivi, Xu, & Kalgora, 2016, p. 264).
- **Self-esteem needs:** Self-esteem needs represent the fourth level of needs. They include the need for self-respect and the approval of others. Organisations introduce awards banquets to recognise achievements. According to Akhtar *et al.* (2015, p. 253), the main purpose of introducing a reward system in an organisation is to attract and retain qualified and competent employees and to control the costs associated with repeated recruitments. Rewards not only help with retention but also motivate employees through a continuous process of psychological, sociological, economic and political exchanges.
- **Self-actualisation:** This occupies the last level at the top of the triangle. It refers to the need to become all that one is capable of being; that is, being able to develop one's fullest potential. The rationale here is that self-actualised employees represent valuable assets in the organisation's human resource. Ahmad (2014, p. 2) asserts that employees who value the development of skills

for their career growth may be more willing to work for an organisation that constantly equips them with relevant knowledge through training and development practice.

Although the theory has been recommended by many scholars, it has been found to have limitations. Venugopalan (2007, p. 74) states that factor analysis techniques have been used to determine if Maslow's classification schemes of needs is correct, and if there is indeed a hierarchy of needs. The results of these tests have failed to support Maslow's classification schemes for human needs, and these tests have failed to support the idea of a hierarchy of needs. Besides, the statement, 'if one's need is satisfied, then another emerges' may create a false impression, because needs are not necessarily fully satisfied, before higher needs dominate and/or are activated. It is better to measure in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction of needs as one goes up in the hierarchy of prepotency (Venugopalan, 2007, p. 75). According to Maslow's theory, people growing up in an environment where their needs are not met, would be unlikely to function as healthy and well-adjusted individuals. Research testing Maslow's theory has supported the distinction between the deficiencies and growth needs but showed that not all people are able to satisfy their higher-order needs on the job (Kaur, 2013, p. 1063).

Venugopalan (2007, p. 76) continues to critique the theory by stating that the need classification scheme is somewhat artificial and arbitrary. Further, he states that there is no evidence that once a need has been gratified, its strength diminishes. It is also doubtful whether gratification of one need automatically activates the next higher need in the hierarchy, as the same need will not lead to the same response in all individuals. The degree of gratification differs from person to person depending upon the intensity of their various need requirements and upon different situations. Graham and Messner (2000, p.198) were also critical of the need theory of motivation (Kaur, 2013, p. 1064). They argue that the theory makes the following unrealistic assumptions about employees in general that: (a) all employees are alike, (b) all situations are alike, and that (c) there is only one best way to meet the needs.

However, Maslow's need hierarchy was not intended to directly apply to work motivation. In fact, he did not delve into the motivating aspects of human beings in organisations until about 20 years after he originally propounded his theory

(Venugopalan, 2007, p. 77). Douglas McGregor popularised Maslow's theory, particularly amongst practising managers. With the theory receiving wide recognition, because of its simplicity and logic, Maslow's theory proposes key variables to staff motivation and greater retention. In this view, all these would give a sense of belonging to the organisation, freedom for innovative thinking, provision of health and wellness programmes, setting performance targets for subordinates and job security (Samuel & Chipunza (2009, p. 413).

### **2.3.2 Herzberg's Two-factor Theory**

Fredrick Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation identifies two sets of factors, namely, hygiene or maintenance factors and motivating factors which influence individuals' attitudes towards their work (Herzberg, 1959). According to Herzberg, hygiene factors, also termed 'dissatisfiers', usually make little contribution to job satisfaction; instead, their presence only prevents dissatisfaction or demotivation in individuals. These factors are extrinsic and are related to the condition under which a job is performed (Msengei & Obwogi, 2015, p. 3). In other words, motivation to work is internally generated and is propelled by variables which are intrinsic to the work, which include achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth. Conversely, certain factors induce dissatisfying experiences in employees, and these factors largely result from non-job related variables, also called extrinsic variables. These are factors such as company policies, salary, co-worker relationships and supervisory or management styles and the work environment (Armstrong, 2009).

Herzberg (1959) believed in empowering employees by giving them more responsibility, making information directly available to employees rather than channelling it through supervisors, assigning new and difficult tasks to individuals, and giving them an opportunity to perform specialised tasks which enable them to become experts. There should be growth and advancement opportunities to motivate the employees to perform well in an organisation. The employees should hold themselves responsible for the work. The managers should give them ownership of the work. They should minimise control but retain accountability. The work itself should be meaningful, interesting and challenging for the employee to perform and become motivated (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959, p. 14).



Hygiene factors are those job factors that are essential for the existence of motivation in the workplace. These do not lead to positive satisfaction on the long term. However, if these factors are absent or if these factors are non-existent in the workplace, they then lead to dissatisfaction. In other words, hygiene factors are those factors which when adequately or reasonably present in a job, pacify the employees and do not make them dissatisfied. These factors are extrinsic to work.

According to Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959, p. 14) the pay or salary is the first and foremost hygiene factor; it should be equal and competitive to those in the same industry in the same domain. The company policies should not be too rigid. They should be fair and clear. It should include flexible working hours, dress code, breaks and vacation. The employees should be offered health care plans, benefits for family members, and employee help programmes. The physical working conditions should be safe, clean and hygienic. The work equipment should be updated and well-maintained. The employees' status within the organisation should be familiar and retained, together with acceptable relationships between employees and peers, on the one hand, and superiors and subordinates, on the other hand. Without any conflict or humiliation, job security should be provided to the employees of an organisation (Hyun, 2009, p. 9).

Lukwago, Basheka and Odubuker (2015, p. 279) stipulate the hygiene and motivating factors as discussed below.

#### *2.3.2.1 Hygiene factors*

**Company policies:** This factor has attracted the highest number of items, and includes strategic plans for human resource development, a succession plan, a mentoring programme for scientists, an operating budget and sufficient funds, a recruitment policy and an ability to attract and retain staff.

**Supervision:** It is crucial for employees to be involved in decision-making, fair appraisal systems, to address complaints raised by researchers, participatory leadership, staff discipline, team work, and feedback and support to subordinates. Das and Baruah (2013, p. 11) mentioned that modern businesses always keep their employees well informed about the important affairs of the business and they involve the employees in decision-making at all levels. Noah (2008, p. 41) adds by stating

employee involvement in decision-making helps to create a sense of belongingness among the employees, which helps to create a good congenial working environment, and contributes towards building a good employer-employee relationship.

**Remuneration:** These refer to service conditions, health insurance, salary and retirement packages, compensation and the provision of commuter, housing and loan facilities. Moncraz, Zhao and Kay (2009, p. 32) argue that although compensation was not one of the top factors influencing non-management turnover, compensation can act as a critical factor in reducing turnover and increasing retention.

**Job security:** This factor is mentioned with few items attached, mainly a fear of job loss and job insecurity.

**Working conditions:** Working conditions should be desirable, health-hazard-conscious and conducive to all employees. The work environment and employee retention benefits from a work environment that provides a sense of belonging. Organisations that have generous human resource policies, stand a good chance of satisfying and retaining employees by providing them with an appropriate level of privacy and sound control in their work environment which enhances the motivation levels to commit to the organisation for the long term (Das & Baruah, 2013, p. 11).

#### *2.3.2.2 Motivating factors*

**Recognition:** Tangible rewards, awards for achievement and recognition of one's input in achieving organisational goals is significant .

**Work itself:** Flexibility, meeting expectations, meaningful work, a sense of belonging, challenging work, work content, self-drive, freedom and work load.

**Career development:** Opportunities for higher levels of responsibility, training and development programmes are also necessary motivators.

Herzberg *et al.* (1959) state that the presence of motivators lead to job satisfaction, while the lack of hygiene factors results in job dissatisfaction. Moreover, the presence of hygiene factors does not necessarily result in an increase of job satisfaction, but only reduces or eliminates the job dissatisfaction of the employees. The two-factor job satisfaction theory of Herzberg *et al.* (1959) has resulted in many

organisations building opportunities for personal growth, enrichment and recognition for their employees, and that is why nowadays, many managers use job promotion and entitlement techniques to motivate their employees, rather than the conventional salary and benefit tools (Golshan *et al.*, 2011, p. 9).

Golshan *et al.* (2011, p. 2) have criticised the Herzberg's theory for the assumption of the contrast between the physical and psychological nature of human beings. It is difficult to distinguish between Herzberg's motivator and hygiene factors, and to distinguish between them in all cases. For example, employees might act defensively when they are asked about factors such as advancement or recognition. It is likely that employees blame their supervisors, subordinates or colleagues for unsatisfactory situations. In addition, in testing Herzberg's theory, frequency of data is used instead of its intensity, and also individual differences and more precisely, individual values might be denied in Herzberg's theory (Golshan *et al.*, 2011, p. 2).

Golsha *et al.* (2011, p. 5) suggest that there are differences between the non-profit, profit-oriented and public sector, including organisation-environment transactions, environmental factors, employee characteristics, internal structure and processes, incentive structures and reporting structures. Specifically, some scholars have claimed that extrinsic motivation factors (hygiene factors), such as pay and advancement, have significantly higher motivating potential for corporate managers than public sector managers. Meanwhile, intrinsic rewards have greater motivating potential for public managers and non-profit managers than for private ones. While negative recognition at work includes some criticism and blame for the job done, positive achievement includes achieving specific successes, such as completing a difficult task on time, solving a job-related problem or seeing positive results of one's work. Negative achievement involves failure to make progress or poor decision-making at work (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, & Maude, 2017, p. 4).

### **2.3.3 Equity Theory**

Equity theory is the theory relating to justice. Fairness is important because it applies to the allocation of resources in the entire social system, ranging from small groups to society as a whole. The concept of fairness was originally located at the level of social psychology and then applied to organisations (Indriani, 2015). The equity

theory (1965) is concerned with the people's perceptions about how they are treated in comparison to others.

According to the equity theory, employees maintain equity between the input they bring to a job (education, time, experience, commitment and effort) and the outcome received from it (promotion, recognition and increased pay), which is measured against the perceived inputs and outcomes of other employees. Failure to find equity can lead to various actions, one of which may be to leave the organisation.

One of the major strengths of this theory is to recognise individual inputs, such as education, experience and efforts. It also shows that individual employees are part of the larger system. The theory, is, however, fallible due to a lower focus on the time and effort put into one's own work. One should perform accordingly for being rewarded. This theory, therefore, guides on understanding any factors influencing staff to leave an organisation. One of the factors is that employees would keep on comparing organisations in terms of various elements, such as targets, salaries, benefits and environments, thus realising a balanced state between the inputs-outcomes ratio. In turn, this contributes to labour mobility within and outside the organisation.

Jørgensen (n.d., p. 10) states that employee equity has three dimensions. The first dimension is the value equity which is an assessment made by an employer of the efforts made by employees in return for the benefits. This is analogous to a cost-to-benefit ratio analysis done by a customer. Thus an employee may look for another job if the pay and compensation provided by the organisation are not commensurate with their efforts, nor are they at par with the compensation offered by other organisations.

The second dimension of employee equity is the brand equity, which is a member's subjective or emotional beliefs regarding an organisation. The organisational branding may also provide incremental preferences for an organisation's desirability as a place to work beyond job and organisational attributes.

The third dimension of equity theory is related to the perception of fairness in the distribution of benefits from similar contributions to group tasks and personal relationships. The contributions are inputs made by an individual, while benefits are

the outcomes from the successful execution of the activity. Most individuals have been found to prefer outcomes which are relatively commensurate with their inputs, especially when compared with outcomes gained from similar inputs provided by a colleague or another individual to which they may be related (Jørgensen, n.d.).

Aik and Fabian (2015, p. 99) explain that equity theory considers pay (salary, wage) to be an outcome. An outcome has been defined by Robbins and Judge (2006) (as cited in Aik & Fabian, 2015, p. 99) as financial reward after an input has been expended or discharged in the form of work or service. Common sense could attest to a common regard, which views pay as one of the most popular remuneration packages given out to recipients, usually workers on a periodical basis. The equity theory considers motivation and job satisfaction as the result of a comparison of a worker's perceived outcomes and inputs to the outcomes and inputs of a referent other (Adams, 1965, cited in Hofmans, 2012, p. 473).

Adams (1965) continues to describe the equity theory as the result of the comparison between the inputs and outcomes of the self and the referent other, and the comparison of both intra-individual ratios between individuals. When the ratios differ, inequity is experienced, which in turn, causes a conflicting situation that elicits stress. Moreover, Adams (1965) argues that the larger the inequity, the larger the stress, and with higher stress, the individual experiences a stronger need to reduce this stress by eliminating the inequity being experienced (Hofmans, 2012, p. 474).

Kaur, Aggarwal and Khaitan (2014, p. 231) outline the four propositions of the equity theory as follows:

- Individuals seek to maximise their outcomes (where outcomes are defined as rewards minus costs).
- Groups can maximise collective rewards by developing accepted systems for equitably apportioning rewards and costs amongst members. Systems of equity will evolve within groups, while some members will attempt to induce other members to accept and adhere to these systems. The only way in which groups can induce members to equitably behave is by making it more profitable to behave equitably than inequitably. Therefore, groups will generally reward

members who treat others equitably and generally punish (increase the cost for) members who treat others inequitably.

- When individuals find themselves participating in inequitable relationships, they become distressed. The more inequitable the relationship, the more distressed the individuals. According to the equity theory, both the person who gets 'too much' and the person who gets 'too little' feel distressed. The person who gets too much may feel guilty or ashamed. The person who gets too little may feel angry or humiliated.
- Individuals who perceive themselves as being in an inequitable relationship attempt to eliminate their distress by restoring equity. The greater the inequity, the more distressed the people feel and more determined to restore equity.

According to Aumer-Ryan, Hatfield and Frey (2007, p. 64), researchers have begun to ask: "Is equity theory applicable to all people in all cultures and all historical eras?" Cross-cultural researchers would say "No". The authors argue that men and women in individualistic cultures (such as North America, Western and Northern Europe, Australia, New Zealand) are far more concerned with fairness in close relationships than are people in collectivist cultures such as Asia, Africa and Latin America. Almost universally, cultural theorists agree that cultural values should profoundly impact on people's definitions of social justice, how important they consider fairness and equity to be; what types of allocations are seen to be fair, in other words, the question that needs to be answered is: should allocations be based on merit, need, equality or proportionality?. In addition, it needs to be determined how fair men and women judge their own close relationships to be; and finally, how content/upset they are when they perceive close relationships to be equitable or inequitable (Triandis & Suh, 2002, cited in Aumer-Ryan *et al.*, 2007, p. 64).

The equity theory has had its share of criticism. Hofmans (2012, p. 474) points out that most of the criticism levelled against equity theory is related to the artificial laboratory conditions in which the theory has been tested. Yet, an even more pertinent issue is whether the theory, as suggested by Adams (1965), really holds. Many studies have overlooked this question as this requires the theory to be evaluated within each person's value system. In particular, equity theory predicts a decrease in work efforts in a situation of underpayment, with the exact decrease in

work efforts depending on the person's valuation of such efforts and the underpayment.

Cosier and Dalton (1983), and Robbins (1994:457) suggest that the theory does not fully address the dynamics of equity and inequity, namely, when, how and why ratios of inputs to outcomes change over time; how employees define inputs and outcomes; and how employees combine and weigh their inputs and outcomes to derive totals (Coldwell & Perumal, 2007, p. 201). Further, Vecchio (1982), Cosier and Dalton (1983, cited in Coldwell & Perumal, 2007, p. 201) criticised the theory for not take account of time and relying on static views of equity.

Banks, Patel and Moola (2012, p. 2) believe that the characteristics (age, gender, race, tenure and educational level) of the employees perceiving a situation may also influence their perceptions of inequity. When perceiving inequity, employees will usually experience a state of cognitive dissonance (or feelings of psychological discomfort). This motivates employees to reduce the discomfort (Weller, 1995). The tension causes a variety of cognitive dissonances. The greater the tension, the greater the motivation to act to reduce it and achieve equity. Employees react differently to inequity, some of whom are more sensitive to it, generally creating a powerful negative motivational impact on the workplace (Tudor, 2011, p. 100). Hofmans (2012, p. 475) affirms that although equity theory was introduced several decades ago, it is still relevant to recent scholarship.

#### **2.3.4 Expectancy Theory**

Victor Vroom (1964) was the scholar first to develop an expectancy theory with direct application to work settings, which was later expanded and refined by Porter and Lawler (1968), amongst others. The expectancy theory has three key elements: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Vroom, 1964). A person is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that (a) effort will lead to an acceptable performance (expectancy), (b) performance will be rewarded (instrumentality), and (c) the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence) (De Simone, 2015, p. 20).

Expectancy is a person's estimate of the probability that job-related efforts will result in a given level of performance. According to Mihai (2014, p. 252), the expectancy theory states that the intensity of one's efforts depends on the value of the reward

which one is expecting to receive. In any situation, people are interested in maximising their gains and minimising their losses (effort and time). It is a cognitive theory, based on a rationalist-economic concept that states that people make decisions through the selection and the evaluation of already known alternatives, choosing the one that offers them the most advantages.

Mihai (2014, p. 252) attests that expectancy theory is widely used in turnover intentions. Fundamental to the idea of expectancy theory is the notion that people join organisations with expectations, and if these expectations are met, they will remain members of such organisations. According to the turnover and retention frameworks that have been developed from this theory, a decision to stay in or leave an organisation can be explained by examining the relationships between the structural, psychological and environmental variables. Daly and Dee (2006) stipulate that the employee's intent to stay is grounded on expectancy theory, which includes structural, psychological and environmental variables.

Structural variables include the work environment, autonomy, communication, distributive justice and workload. Psychological variables include job satisfaction and organisational commitment, while the environmental variables include the availability of job opportunities. However, Sutherland (2004) established that job satisfaction and organisational commitment do not necessarily lead to loyalty, which has long been defined as the intention to remain with the employer.

Valence is the strength of an employee's preference for a particular reward. Theoretically, a reward has a valence because it is related to an employee's needs. The reward, such as promotion, peer acceptance, or recognition by supervisors, might have more or less value for individual employees. Unlike expectancy and instrumentality, valence can be either positive or negative. If an employee has a strong preference for attaining a reward, valence is positive. At the other extreme, valence is negative. However, if an employee is indifferent to a reward, valence is 0 (De Simone, 2015, p. 20).

As previously stated, this theory is based on three basic elements: expectancy (effort-performance relationship), instrumentality (performance-outcome relationship), valence (value of the outcome). Intensive motivation will arise from combining these three mandatory elements. The lack of one element (whichever of



the aforementioned three elements) will result in a lack of motivation (Mihai, 2014, p. 252). In essence, this means for one to be motivated in doing a certain activity, one should value the associated reward, to believe that one can accomplish the said activity and to be assured that one's performance will be rewarded. According to Suciu, Mortan and Lazăr (2013, p. 184), the expectancy theory maintains people are motivated to behave in ways which produce the desired or expected outcomes (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1998, p. 227).

Vroom's expectancy theory continues to explain the motivated behaviour as goal-oriented. The author argues that people tend to act in a hedonistic way (Vroom, 1964), preferring the actions which would bring the highest subjective utility.

Suciu *et al.* (2013, p. 183) further state that the expectancy theory argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome, and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual (Robbins, 1993). As a consequence, behaviour could be oriented towards anticipated and individualised goals.

Ramli and Jusoh (2015) indicate that instrumentality and valence can also predict motivation and performance, which is known as the modified expectancy theory. According to this modified theory, the action is a means of obtaining rewards. If the individuals do not value the rewards, they will not work hard to meet the targets.

Expectancy that one's effort will lead to a desired performance is based on experience, self-confidence and the perceived difficulty of the performance goal. Instrumentality is the perceived probability that good performance will lead to desired outcomes. Trust, control and policies are variables affecting the individual's instrumentality perception. Based on the instrumentality, if individuals do meet performance expectation, they will receive a greater reward (Chiang & Jang, 2008, p. 314). Vroom (1964) views expectancy theory as applicable to almost everything we do in both the working and non-working time.

According to Parijat and Bagga (2014, p. 4), the expectancy theory has both merits and limitations. Many experts in the field of organisational behaviour hold the view that the expectancy theory is one of the most acceptable theories of motivation. As

such, many studies have substantial evidence to support the theory, thereby testing the accuracy of the expectancy theory and predicting employee behaviour.

Managers can benefit from the expectancy theory as it helps them to understand the psychological processes causing motivation. However, Parijat and Bagga (2014, p. 5) report on expert views on the complexity of the theory in terms of testing and implementation. All employees may not have the time, willingness, favourable situations, resources or even ability to calculate motivation as assumed by this theory. Similarly, the managers also may be lacking in one or more of the above parameters to make decisions on things motivating particular employees.

### **2.3.5 Organisational culture**

As one of the motivational factors for staff retention, culture is defined as the expected ways of thinking, feeling and reacting that are acquired and transmitted through the use of symbols which are unique to certain groups of people (Chambers, 2009). Dadie (2015, p. 21) states that an organisational culture is presented as fundamental to greater staff retention. Culture is pervasive and influences all aspects of an organisation's dealings with its primary tasks, its various environments and its internal operations (Schein, 2004, p. 8). An organisational culture combines a set of factors which guide a given organisation. It is the characteristic spirit and belief of an organisation, demonstrated, for example, in the norms and values generally held about how people should treat each other, the nature of working relationships and attitudes towards changes (Torrington & Weightman, 1989).

The psychological aspect of corporate culture is further emphasised by Nasir and Sabir (2012, p. 6097), as they argue that it can also be described as the psychology, attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values (personal and cultural values) of an organisation. The correlation between organisational culture and staff retention is made by Sheridan (1992, p. 1038), as he believes that corporate culture has a strong impact on staff retention. The importance of culture for an organisation is further emphasised by Tharp (2009, p. 2) who argues that culture is considered as the 'glue' that holds an organisation together, while others regard it as the 'compass' that provides direction.

The culture of an organisation can be viewed from different approaches, including that proposed by the Hofstede (2001) centre's six cultural dimensions. These are 1) power distance, 2) uncertainty avoidance, 3) collectivism versus individualism, 4) masculinity versus femininity, 5) long-term orientation versus short-term normative orientation, and 6) indulgence versus restraint.

As such, NGOs are collectivist and have a short-term normative orientation. Even though some tasks, including writing proposals for getting funds, are carried out by an individual or a number of people in collaboration, NGOs do not reward the winner of the funds. Rather managers would recognise the whole team or all the great work of the organisation. This contrasts with the characteristics of Generation Y staff (the generation born in the 1980s and 1990), who are tagged as the "Generation Me" by Main (2009, p. 4) or "trophy kids". The general criticism of this generation is that they tend to achieve something, while expecting a personal reward or acknowledgement, as is done by many multinationals where financial bonuses, awards and different types of rewards are used to create a competitive, creative and innovative workforce.

Schein (1984, p. 9) stated that culture can be defined as "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration". Such a pattern has worked well enough and should be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel (Liang, 2013, p. 31).

According to Shanghvi (2012, p. 16), employees should also learn to embrace and respect cultural differences. A multi-cultural workforce brings wide behavioural variations, and communication is very important. A successful cross-cultural communication considers the following mutual broad understanding of the cultures and their differences: knowledge about the communication barriers; skills to integrate the understanding, knowledge to facilitate interaction, and support of all employees and the entire community.

Daft (1994) further defined an organisational culture as a series of three core elements: values, beliefs and behaviour. These are reflected in the rituals, legends and language. However, most academic writers think that this is too superficial to lead to an understanding of the dynamism and complexity of culture. Thus, a definition of culture should be both pluralistic and holistic. For example, Ogbonna

and Harris (2002a, p. 34; as cited by Liang, 2013, p. 30-31) defined culture as “the collective sum of beliefs, values, meanings, assumptions which are shared by a social group and that help to shape the ways in which such a group respond to each other and to their external environment”.

Anything that can be defined in life has a certain value. Since an organisational culture can be defined in many forms, it means that it also has many values. When a founder ‘builds’ an organisation from the bottom up, it is done through the application of the knowledge and experiences that have been accumulated up that moment. According to Popa (2018, p. 205), these two parts will form the basis for the culture that is implemented in the company. The cultural structure that takes shape will be defined by the values, symbols, certain ways of working, principles and methods, all of which can be defined as the invisible part of the company. The “organisational culture is considered to be the invisible force from behind readily observable and tangible things in an organisation being also the social energy causing people to act” (Popa, 2018, p. 205).

According to Tănase (2015, p. 848), the assumption is that by following the structure, the company’s target will be achieved. The employees that work in the company are supposed to understand and follow this cultural structure so that the process can go as smoothly as possible without any interference or delay. Of course, over time, organisational leaders could decide that the starting beliefs are no longer useful, and they may choose to eliminate some of them, leaving only a few important ones. A deeply rooted culture is as important as the knowledge of when change is needed. For a smooth and successful change of organisational culture to take place, every employee should proactively approach and work side-by-side with the other (Tănase, 2015, p. 850).

Weak organisational cultures are characterised by a high level of cultural entropy, which is the proportion of energy wasted on non-productive activities by a group of people (Barets, 2008). A weak organisational culture indicates weak human resource management (HRM). Any organisational culture consists of subcultures. Such subcultures are relatively independent systems of values, norms and behavioural stereotypes which exist in a cultural context, without necessarily sharply conflicting with it (Zepa, 2017). Schein (1985) identified three general subcultures which exist in

every organisation, namely: subculture of employees, subculture of creators, and management (leadership) subculture (Dubkevics & Barbars, 2010, p. 3).

Dubkevics and Barbars (2010, p. 3) ascertain that there are more than a dozen typological theories. The four basic types of organisational culture are: hierarchy culture; market culture; clan culture; and adhocracy culture. This typology is based on the four criteria of: flexibility and discretion; stability and control; external focus and differentiation; internal focus and integration.

In the context of human resource development potential, the emotional aspects of an organisational culture are particularly important. If emotions are not considered in the organisational culture, there is a risk of an alexotimical human resource environment, characterised by routine, schematic thinking, low productivity and burn-out syndrome. Organisations with a low level of emotional intelligence are not creative. Recently, such terms as emotional company and E (emotional) business have emerged in the business vocabulary (Dubkēvičs, 2009). This shows that the role of emotions is being increasingly recognised in organisations (Dubkevics & Barbars, 2010, p. 9).

### **2.3.6 Psychological contract**

Argyris (1960) was the first researcher to conceptualise the term 'psychological work contract' in a study involving a foreman and his team. Here, the author described an implicit relationship between a group of employees and their supervisor. Dadi (2012, p. 88) mentions that researchers viewed the concept as a perception resulting from an exchange agreement between two parties: the employer and employee. Today, the concept has grown globally to almost every interpersonal relationship, such as that between doctors and patients, the state and individuals, husbands and wives, teachers and students, football clubs and players, and lawyers and clients. Universally, the individual background and upbringing varies from one person to another, and as people move from country to country in search of a better life, it has resulted in the concept being viewed differently, thus resulting in researchers defining the concept in their own way (Dadi, 2012, p. 88).

As stated above, the term 'psychological contract' was first used in the 1960s to identify an informal type of contract between an employer and employees (Mackay,

2007, p. 190). Traditionally, the relationship between an employer and employees is established by a physical contract in the form of a document signed by both parties and which is legally valid. However, it is important to see beyond this formal contract when it comes to staff retention. A psychological contract is defined as the unspoken pact that links staff members to their employer (Mackay, 2007, p. 190). It aims to create a sense of loyalty towards the employer. The psychological contract is an approach that requires particular attention in terms of Generation Y retention in humanitarian organisations (Mackay, 2007, p. 190).

A psychological contract is an employee's beliefs regarding the mutual obligations between the employee and an employer. These beliefs entail perceptions regarding the inducements (pay, recognition) promised by an employer, compared to the inducements delivered by the employer (Lambert, Edwards & Cable, 2003, p. 895). When a psychological contract is violated, employees may experience anger, distrust, reduced loyalty and commitment, and there may be an increased propensity to leave the organisation. Traditionally, research on the psychological contract has emphasised situations in which inducements are deficient, meaning the inducements received by the employee are less than what the employer promised.

Given that such a contract is established with the free will of both parties, it bears a particular strength. Therefore, it may be more influential than the formal contract in affecting how employees behave from day to day (CIPD, 2014). According to Kiewitz (2004), the role of the psychological contracts is important in retention, as it motivates workers to fulfil commitments made to employers. While the psychological contract can help to reinforce staff commitment, it also has a negative connotation for some of them, and is described as Schein (2015, p. 11) as a form of brainwashing.

Although the position may be exaggerated to the candidate and there may sometimes be a tendency to present only the most attractive aspects of the role to job seekers, it has the advantage of mentally preparing the staff, making them entirely responsible for their decisions on the role and building mutual trust. Dadie (2015, p. 22) point to the opposite, seeing the staff as becoming disillusioned, distrusting, demotivated and leaving their roles prematurely.

Dadi (2012, p. 91-94) explains the criticism towards the psychological contract as follows: the traditional legal contract includes every employee, whereas the psychological contract is individually based. Researchers' failure not to agree on a single definition of the psychological contract means that any employee's perceptions could be considered as part of the psychological contract, but this was criticised as being misleading, vague, and ambiguous. Dadi (2012, p. 94) further implies that the psychological contract varies from one person to another because of the employees' cultural background and upbringing. People's circumstances change as they seek to improve the lives of their families. If the exchange agreement did not reflect their expectation, the employee may not continue with the employment nor adhere to the exchange agreement. The argument is that if the employees' obligations outside the organisation were unmet, most employees would look for another job elsewhere. It is, therefore, necessary to renegotiate the terms and conditions of the exchange agreement, so as to keep the psychological contract alive (Schein, 1965, cited in Dadi, 2012, p. 94).

The psychological contract also offers a framework for monitoring employee attitudes towards and their priorities in terms of those dimensions that may be crucial for performance. As Umar and Ringim (2015, p. 219) out, organisations wishing to succeed and realise their goals should get the best out of their human resources. In order to do this, employers should be aware of their employees' expectations. It is important for organisations to understand and manage the expectations of their employees in order to fulfil the organisation's side of the contract (Festing & Schafer, 2014, p. 262).

The idea behind the psychological contract is that employees commonly feel obliged to contribute much more to their organisation than any defined tasks. Organisations are also seen to be obliged to offer more to employees than the benefits they may be rightly entitled to. Finally, the psychological contract may involve additional organisational obligations, such as protecting jobs by avoiding unnecessary cutting down of jobs, and by offering career development opportunities for the personal development of individual employees.

### **2.3.7 Theory X and Theory Y**

Douglas McGregor (1960) proposed his famous Theory X and Theory Y, which are commonly grounded within the field of management and motivation, although more recent studies have questioned the rigidity of the model. McGregor maintained two fundamental approaches to managing people, wherein managers generally tend towards theory X, with poor results. Enlightened teachers or managers use Theory Y, which produces better performance and results, and allows people to grow and develop (Kayode, 2013).

Aithal and Kumar (2016, p. 2) maintain that Theory X sees the average human as lazy and self-centred, lacking ambition, disliking change, and longing to be told what to do. On the other hand, Theory Y maintains that human beings are active rather than passive shapers of themselves and of their environment. In this view, human beings long to grow and assume responsibilities. The best way to manage them, then, is to manage as little as possible.

This theory explains two conflicting observations of people at work that will influence management style. Theory X is perceived as the traditional view of direction and control. Theory Y involves a more self-directed workforce with an interest in the goals of their organisation, incorporating some of their own goals into these. Theory X assumes that the average person dislikes work and will avoid it unless directly supervised. In addition, employees need to be coerced, controlled and directed to ensure the organisational objectives are met; the threat of punishment exists within an organisation and they prefer to be managed this way to avoid responsibility. It also assumes that people are relatively unambitious and their primary driving force is the desire for security (Mat, 2008, p. 36).

On the other hand, Theory Y is the extreme opposite and perceives employees to be motivated, keen to have greater accountability and apply both self-control and direction. The employees will work towards organisational objectives and that commitment will in itself be the reward for so doing. The employees will exercise their thoughts and imagination in their jobs, if given the chance, and this will provide an opportunity for greater productivity. Theory Y assumes that the common human being will, under acceptable conditions, not only take responsibility but also look for more. However, the lack of ambition which is one of the qualities of Theory X points



to no innate human characteristics; instead, these behaviours are learned in working environments which suffocate employees and/or do not promote Theory Y behaviour (Okumbe, 1998, p. 6).

According to Masibigiri and Nienaber (2011), Generation X employees are losing their trust in, and loyalty to their organisations and fear boredom. Organisations should retain them if they are to create and sustain their competitive advantage. Generation X employees are human capital repositories of knowledge, skills and expertise, and ensure good performance. Retaining the Generation X employees, in particular, is important for both the private and public sectors. To illustrate, Kayode (2013, p. 1-2) briefly tabulates the theories as follows:

***Theory X (Authoritarian management style)***

- a) The average person dislikes work and will avoid it as far as they can;
- b) Therefore, most people should be threatened with punishment so as to work towards organisational objectives;
- c) The average person prefers to be directed to avoid any responsibility, and is relatively unambitious, and wants security above all else.

***Theory Y (Participative management style):***

- a) Efforts at work are as natural as work and play;
- b) People will apply self-control and self-direction in the pursuit of organisational objectives without external control or threat of punishment;
- c) Commitment to objectives is a function of rewards associated with their achievement;
- d) People usually accept and often seek responsibility;
- e) The capacity to use a high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in solving organisational problems is widely distributed in the population;
- f) In an industry, the intellectual potential of the average person is only partly used.

Generally, organisations adopt one of these primary theories as their management approaches to human capital. However, this ignores the tenets of Maslow's hierarchy of needs on which they are modelled. According to Byorum (2015, p.47), when a

specific management theory is applied to a culture, whether cognitively or incidentally, attempts are made to find people who respond to values on a spectrum of motivational needs. The adoption of a specific management style on the presumption that everyone operates from the same psychological calibre of needs will lead to frustration and turnover.

Based on McGregor's (1960) theories, managers possessing Y-type managerial attitudes will enact more Y-type managerial behaviour. More specifically, managers with a positive view of human nature will act in accordance with these beliefs, and will show higher levels of Y-type behaviour, providing higher levels of encouragement, delegation, autonomy, responsibility, and more general, rather than close, supervision (Lawter, Kopelman & Prottas, 2015, p. 86).

In fact, Ibietan (2010, p. 6) observes that both theories (X and Y) can be considered as an extreme range of assumptions. Both theories are rarely used in their pure forms. Instead, each manager should identify with and appreciate the uniqueness of individual workers and treat them as such. In essence, there is a need for flexibility in how managers view the two theories and apply them.

Therefore, this study recognises that staff retention in NGOs does not solely depend on one or a few ideologies, for various substantial reasons. Organisations should explore their individual employee needs, such as psychological, environmental, cultural, monetary, gender, age, and family needs, and implement them to maximise employee retention. Donor-funded organisations, such as the focal organisation, mainly focus on employees achieving the set targets for which they are compensated in monetary terms (Nwokocha, 2012, p. 101).

The organisation can best benefit from the theories discussed to tailor the organisational policies to suit their employees. For example, the focal organisation's staff complement consist of 75% Generation Y staff members (PSI Lesotho Staff Records, 2017) who can benefit from more responsibilities and more accountability, with minimum supervision. In addition, there 32% (PSI Lesotho Staff Records, 2017) married employees who might be inclined to have time off rather than working extra shifts for more pay.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 2 showcased the multiple retention strategies that can contribute to staff retention in the workplace. The strategies that were highlighted included the work environment, recruitment, training and development, employee engagement systems, and people focused strategies. The chapter further discussed theories related to retention, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, equity theory, and expectancy theory, among others.

The study attempted to explore the challenges faced by the focal HIV/AIDS testing organisation in staff retention and factors to be considered. When designing retention strategies management should consider the various elements which the staff would value and which may persuade them to remain with the organisation. More importantly, by implementing variables attractive to its employees, the organisation can specifically focus on factors which competitively put it above the market. Such intangible rewards would create a sense of psychological satisfaction among the staff.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology used to collect data in the HIV/AIDS testing organisation in Lesotho in order to determine the challenges being experienced in terms of staff retention.

## CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

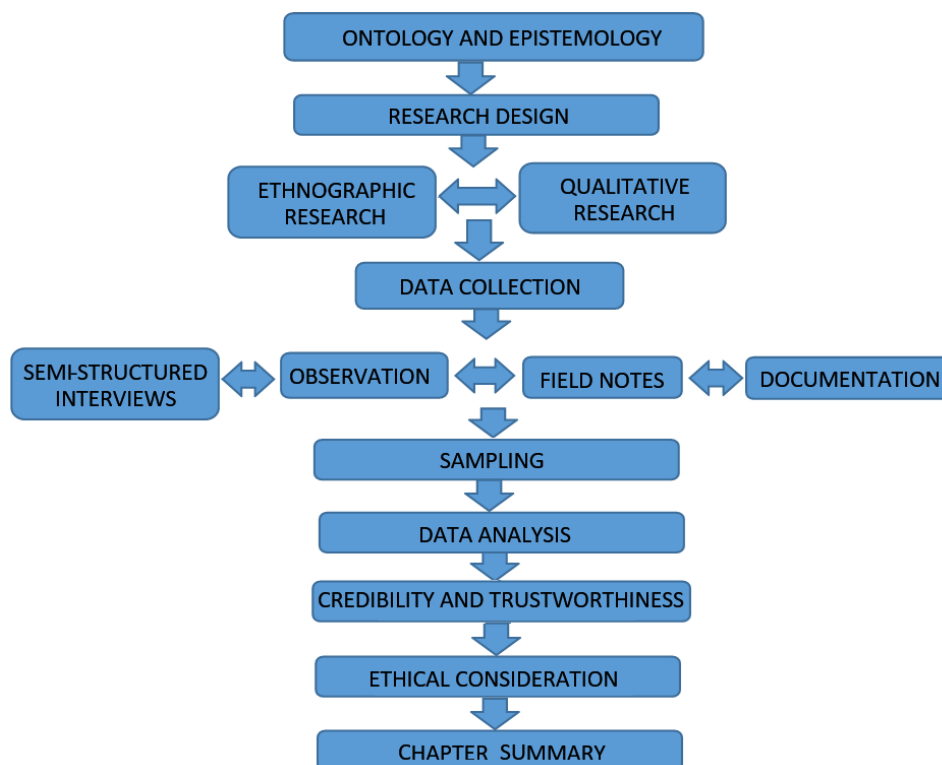
This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in this study. A detailed explanation of the research design is provided, including qualitative data-collection methods, data analysis, logic and methodology, as well as subjects employed in this study. Moreover, based on the qualitative research, this chapter presents the primary data collection, which was supplemented by secondary documentary sources for this study. For data analysis, the thematic data analytic approach was used to enable the researcher to explore and distil the major themes identified as key to the issue by the subjects themselves. The chapter concludes by summarising all the elements discussed.

### 3.2 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, Figure 3.1 provides a compilation of the conceptual model as will be discussed in the following sections.

Figure 3.1

*Conceptual Model: Chapter overview and research methodology*



Source: Researcher's own compilation

The researcher is sensitive to the age-old tension between epistemology and ontology. Ontology and epistemology are two different ways of viewing a research philosophy. Busse *et al.* (2015, p. 29) explain ontology as the science of being. It covers everything that exists, including all sciences. Ontology is a system of beliefs which reflects an individual interpretation about what constitutes a fact. In other words, ontology is associated with a central question related to whether social entities should be perceived as objective or subjective (Bryman, 2004, p. 17). Abubakar *et al.* (2015) further explain ontology as the study of being or existence; it is a specification of a concept, categories of things that exist or may exist in some domain.

Accordingly, objectivism (or positivism) and subjectivism can be specified as two important aspects of ontology. Objectivism “portrays the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence” (Bryman, 2004, p. 17). Alternatively, objectivism “is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors”. On the contrary, subjectivism, also known as constructionism or interpretivism, perceives social phenomena as being created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors which are concerned with their existence (Bryman, 2004, p. 17).

Ontology provides criteria for distinguishing between various types of objects (concrete and abstract, existent and non-existent, real and ideal, independent and dependent) and their ties (relations, dependences and predication). However, the design of an ontological theory of the social being is intended to provide the aspects or dimensions of actual on-going social processes, in time and in place, which can be appropriated by an ethnographic project of inquiry (Smith, 2005, p. 5).

Al-Saadi (2014, p. 6) summarised the philosophical views of ontology as presented in the table below.

Table 3.1

*Key philosophical research positions and their underlying assumptions*

<b>ONTOLOGICAL POSITIONS (Nature of the world and existence)</b>	
<b>Position</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<b>Objectivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reality exists independently of our beliefs or understanding.</li> <li>– Reality can be observed directly and accurately.</li> <li>– A clear distinction exists between our beliefs about the world and the way the world is.</li> <li>– Only the material or physical world is considered 'real'.</li> <li>– Social phenomena and their meanings cannot change.</li> <li>– Events have causes and are determined by other circumstances.</li> <li>– The casual links between events and their causes can eventually be uncovered by science.</li> <li>– Life is defined in 'measurable' terms rather than inner experiences.</li> <li>– Notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility are excluded.</li> </ul>
<b>Constructionism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– External reality exists but is only known through the human mind and socially constructed meanings.</li> <li>– There is no shared social reality, only a series of different individual constructions of it.</li> <li>– Reality is subjective.</li> <li>– There exists only estimates or approximate observations or views of reality.</li> <li>– Social phenomena and their meanings are produced through social interaction and are in a constant state of revision.</li> <li>– Life is defined in 'estimate' terms based on the inner experiences of humans, where choice, freedom and individual responsibility are appreciated.</li> </ul>

Source: Researcher's own compilation, adapted from Al-Saadi (2014)

Epistemology refers to the philosophical study of the nature, origin and limits of human knowledge. An epistemology addresses the query of what is (or should be) regarded as a suitable knowledge discipline, whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos as natural sciences (Bryman, 2004, p. 11).

For Al-Saadi (2014, p. 2), epistemology is generally concerned with the assumptions made about a kind of knowledge, or it is as a way of looking at the world and making sense of it.

Defined narrowly, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified beliefs. As the study of knowledge, epistemology is also concerned with sufficient conditions of knowledge, the sources, structure and the limits thereof. As the study of justified belief, epistemology aims to answer questions related to justified concepts, justified beliefs, as well as the internal and external beliefs. Understood more broadly, epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry. “It is the very basis of knowledge - its nature and form, how it can be acquired and communicated to other human beings” (Bryman, 2004, p. 11).

Al-Saadi (2014, p. 7) emphasises epistemology as illustrated in the table below.

Table 3.2

*Key philosophical research positions and their underlying assumptions*

<b>EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS (nature of knowledge and how it is acquired)</b>	
<b>Position</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<b>Positivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The world is independent of and unaffected by the researcher.</li> <li>– Facts and values are distinct.</li> <li>– Objective and value-free inquiry is possible.</li> <li>– Disputes are resolved through observations.</li> <li>– Methods of natural science are appropriate for the study of social phenomena.</li> <li>– Knowledge is produced through the senses, based on careful observation.</li> <li>– Only phenomena (and hence, knowledge) confirmed by the senses can be genuinely regarded as knowledge.</li> <li>– Knowledge is seen as hard, tangible and objective.</li> <li>– Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts.</li> <li>– The social world is approached through the <i>explanation</i> of human behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretivism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The researcher and the social world impact on each other.</li> <li>– Facts and values are not distinct.</li> <li>– Objective and value-free inquiry is not possible, since findings are inevitably influenced by the researchers’ perspectives and values.</li> <li>– Methods of natural science are <i>not</i> appropriate for the study of social phenomena, for the social world is not governed by law-like regularities but mediated through meaning and human agency.</li> <li>– Knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied.</li> <li>– Knowledge is seen as personal, subjective and unique.</li> <li>– The researcher understands the social world using both his/her as well as participants’ understanding</li> </ul>

EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS (nature of knowledge and how it is acquired)	
Position	Assumptions
	– The social world is approached through the <i>understanding of human</i> behaviour

Source: Researcher's own compilation, adapted from Al-Saadi (2014)

Cloete *et al.* (2018, p. 33) explain paradigms by linking them to concepts, models and theories. The authors note a concept as an abstract idea that illustrates an intangible phenomenon, for example, “administration”, “corruption”, “democracy” or “management”. As a model, a paradigm represents a more complex reality to describe and explain the relationship between variables, while as a theory it is a systematic explanation of relationships amongst variables. An ideology or paradigm is a collection of concepts, models and theories comprising an intellectual framework explaining, justifying and predicting social events (Cloete *et al.*, 2018, p. 33).

The current study adopted an inductive approach to the theory discussed in the literature, incorporating data collection and analysis all of which will contribute to a particular school of thought. It explored the realities of employees who choose to leave or stay with the organisation.

### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Akhtar (2016, p. 68) states that the research design could be interpreted as the structure of the research that plans and contains all the elements of the proposed research. Durrheim (2004, p. 29) describes a research design as a tool which maps the direction of the research project, from the planning stage (research questions), to the implementation of the proposed strategy.

In conceptualising an ethnographic design, Fetterman (2010, p. 8) associates it with an idealised blueprint or a road map which helps ethnographers to follow the steps for building knowledge and understanding. Creswell (2014) suggests that the research design gives a specific direction or procedure to the different types of research methods, such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches. For Welman *et al.* (2005, p. 78), the purpose of a research design is to design an intentional strategy to defeat research problems.



The structure and execution of a research project can be done differently, depending on the specific research design that is used, including, for example, experimental, quasi-experimental, non-experimental and qualitative designs (Welman *et al.*, 2005, p. 78).

This study was based on a qualitative design, as the driving logic that undergirds the processes of data collection and analysis.

### **3.3.1 Qualitative research**

Schadewitz and Timothy (2007, p. 5) state that the inductive approach uses the data to generate ideas. The deductive method starts with an idea or a theoretical framework and uses the data to verify or disprove the idea. The main difference between inductive and deductive approaches to research is that whilst a deductive approach is aimed at testing theories, an inductive approach is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data (Schadewitz & Timothy, 2007, p. 5).

The current study used the inductive theory to establish the phenomenon of staff retention at the organisation. The main purpose of the approach is to identify new theories that NGOs could implement to retain its staff in the high-paced, donor-funded industry. Existing theories of staff retention were tabulated from the literature and were explored during the data collection and analysis, to determine if they were pertinent to the study or whether new theories would emerge from the findings.

The epistemological view of qualitative research is concerned with developing and explaining social phenomena. It helps to illuminate the social world and to explain why things are the way they are. It is about the social aspects of the world, including social behaviour, opinions, attitudes, their environment and how it affects them, their culture, practices and their developing into being (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2009, p. 7).

According to Creswell (2014), purposeful sampling, the collection of open-ended data, the analysis of text or pictures, representation of information in figures and tables, and the personal interpretation of the findings, all inform qualitative methods. Qualitative research allows the researcher to make distinctions and see ambiguities in the data. Qualitative methods also provide in-depth and open-ended research into

observations of the way of being, which allows flexibility in pursuing research questions. Qualitative data builds credible evidence, similar to that of a court case, and looks into individual observations, making a holistic picture of the phenomena being studied.

Qualitative research is an approach to understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. The data are typically collected in the participants' setting, with data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher interpreting the meanings of the data (Creswell, 2014). Blanche *et al.* (2006, p. 47) state that qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth, openness, and detail, as they identify and attempt to understand the categories of information emerging from the data. Qualitative research often examines the views and/or explores the internal worlds of participants. The data are generated through interviews and focus groups. Qualitative research often collects data from small sampled groups of people, and can provide a glimpse of understanding of the people or objects under study.

Qualitative research can also be seen as constructivist, viewing the world from the reality of the beholder. This means that there is no single explanation for the reality given, but multiple, relative dimensions which can be cast by using subjective and naturalistic methods (Kielmann, Cataldo, & Seeley, 2012, p. 8). Qualitative methods are flexible, providing room for spontaneity and adaptation during the interactions involving the researcher and participants.

Qualitative methods describe the experiences of the participants in the research programme. The purpose is to portray to the researcher what transpired under the observed environment, what was the perception of the participant in the setting and what particular activities or events meant to the participant (Genzuck, 2003, p. 9).

For the purpose of the current study, qualitative research was used to identify the challenges of staff retention at the organisation, to comprehend the context in which the challenges arise, taking into consideration the organisation as an NGO, a health services provider, a donor-driven organisation, and the environment in which it operates. After the data was collected, they were analysed systematically and

interpreted, with the recommendations finally being made for the attention of the organisation under study.

### **3.3.2 Ethnographic research**

According to Harris and Johnson (2000), ethnography is a close observation of social practices and interactions through qualitative methods. In focusing on the details of individual experiences, ethnology provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of certain situations or meanings of processes as experienced by the participants under study. Harris and Johnson (2000) continue to explain ethnography as a portrait of people. It describes a particular culture, customs, beliefs, and it is an up-close and personal human experience collected through fieldwork that is significantly categorised. Fetterman (2010, p. 1) summarises ethnography as “telling a credible, a rigorous and an authentic story. Ethnography gives voice to the people in their local context, typically relying on verbatim narratives and thick descriptions of events”.

Elaborating further on the concept, Van Maanen (2015, p. 40) views ethnography as a logic, a stance, rather than a given method or any particular type of study. It denotes an epistemology, that is a way of knowing, and the resultant kind of knowledge. It is anything but a recipe. It involves fieldwork, intelligence and a literature review, and typically results in a written representation of the cultural understandings held by others, meanings about work, about careers, and about life that are closely tied to a specific context, and that are always provisional and partial. It is both dynamic and recursive but the encounter with the ‘foreign’ or ‘unknown’ or ‘strange’ is the very essence of ethnography.

Larsson (2006, p. 2) explains that in terms of theoretical foundations, research practices, and disciplinary contexts, ethnology uses a heterogeneous sample. Brewer (2000, p. 6) explains that for years, ethnographers have aspired to seek a better, more in-depth understanding of how people experience, perceive, create and navigate the social world by entering the participants’ spaces. Ethnography is a method quite agreeable to medicine, and, therefore, an acceptable approach to a health care environment. Using ethnography gives as insight into the decision-makers in the health care environment (Goodson & Vassar, 2011, p. 5).

According to Van Maanen (1996, p. 162), ethnography is rigorous research of a single area which focuses on learning about the participants' culture, language and history through observations and interview methods. Ethnographic methods give a fresh perspective to constructs, paradigms and new variables, for further empirical testing in the field, or through traditional, quantitative and social science methods (Van Maanen, 1996, p. 162).

Ethnography brings a sense of significance to the research field as it uniquely tells the stories of the participants through the work of the researcher in the context involving naturally occurring activities as in participants' daily lives. An ethnographer may be seen to analyse multiple types of data, such as interviews, direct observations, photographs, journals, cultural artefacts, or asking people to describe a situation. Using data this way allows an ethnographer to see multiple perspectives of a situation. It also helps the researcher to correlate participants' 'understandings and behaviour' (Goodson & Vassar, 2011, p. 3).

Creswell (2007, p. 68) states that an ethnographer focuses on a cultural group. The group may be small, but it would typically be a fairly large group, involving many people who interact over time. It is a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviour, beliefs and language of the group. As a process, ethnography involves extended observations of the group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people, and observes and interviews the group participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 69). Welman *et al.* (2005, p. 193) state that the primary task of ethnographic research is to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and manage their situations, as well as identifying the problems and difficulties they encounter. The study uncovered the challenges of staff retention within the setting of the organisation using ethnographic research.

According to Harrington (2003, p. 596), ethnographic research has a wide contribution to make to social psychological practices that, if pursued in thorough order, could provide the needed conceptual bridge between the people doing the actual work and the operational procedures, in other words, to link the employees to the prevailing challenges of staff retention in the organisation.

Ethnographers collect different kinds of data, generated through the use of different kinds of methods, into conversation with each other, and these interactions among the different methods are what give ethnography its specific utility with respect to studying organisational processes (Harrington, 2003, p. 596). Such intertwining pays attention to the varied character of organisational life, such as noting organisational actors' sense-making practices across different situations, for example, what people do, say, their daily routines, as well as their work patterns (Ybema, Yanow & Wels, 2009, p. 6).

### **3.4 DATA-COLLECTION METHODS**

Data-collection techniques selected allow researchers to systematically collect information about the study phenomena, for example, from people and objects, as well as the settings in which they occur (Rakotsoane & Rakotsoane, 2007, p. 20). Creswell (2009, p. 178) adds that the data-collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, review of document and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. Reeves, Kuper and Hodges (2008, p. 512) posit that ethnographers typically gather data through observing the participants, recording a variety of elements in their field notes, while conducting interviews in a naturalistic manner.

A systematic approach to data collection comprised various data-collection methods. The methods included semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes and documentary sources, all of which further informed the research and adapted to overt roles for transparency. According to Bryman (2004, p. 294), an overt ethnographer is a researcher who discloses their role and intentions to the participants to avoid ethical issues and lack of consent.

#### **3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews**

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 3), ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews. The central aim of ethnography is to offer ironic, all-inclusive perceptions of people's opinions (Reeves

*et al.* 2008, p. 512). Semi-structured interviews can play an important role in asserting people's opinions. According to Abawi (2013), there are three types of interviews, one of which is the semi-structured interview. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 87). The researcher has a list of key themes, issues and questions to be covered. In this type of interview, the order of the questions can be changed, depending on the direction of the interview (Abawi, 2013). Datko (2015, p. 143) states that the principal aim of the semi-structured interview is to obtain an informant's subjective responses to a known situation from their lived world.

However, Green (2011, p. 138) claims that an ethnographic interview design tends to compromise reliability by favouring the zones interviewees find most stimulating, therefore, focusing more on those areas, and in the direction led by an interviewer in the conversation. There is a guiding list of imperative themes enclosed in every interview, but not all respondents would want to disclose all parts to an identical degree, as this is too predictable when the study deals with individuals, as individuals are unique and vary from one another (Green, 2011, p. 138).

Reeves *et al.* (2008, p. 512) see annotations by ethnographers regularly using casual or chatty interviews, allowing them to converse, investigate any developing concerns, and/ or ask questions about rare proceedings in a realistic way. Because of the unpremeditated nature of this type of data-collection technique, it can be valuable in eliciting extremely open stories from people. Asher and Miller (2011, p. 15) suggest that semi-structured interviews ask open-ended questions to allow the respondents to describe or demonstrate events, retrospect their experiences, and reflect on their development of the status quo.

Genzuk (2003, p. 6) claims that there is no single, specific way of conducting a semi-structured interview. There is no correct appropriate way for all situations; and no single way of writing or asking questions that will always be appropriate. Ethnographers convey their own exclusive methods to the interview. As such, the importance lies in permitting the interviewee to respond without being restricted by pre-defined selections (Lourdunathan, n.d.). One of the primary goals of ethnology is to identify, understand, make sense of the participant's perspective, which makes it essential to use interviews and conversations, which allows one to record the

thoughts and words of informants. Therefore, using interviews to its maximum effect through planning should be done carefully (Murchison, 2010, p. 44).

While interviews are considered to be difficult to conduct, ethnographers use them as a vehicle for being cooperative rather than inquisitive, and directed and not controlled. Instead, they are deemed to be loose and typically comfortable (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 272). According to Fetterman (2010, p. 46), open-ended questions allow the participants to interpret it in their own way and add as much detail as possible; even though they may digress, such approaches often shed more light on the topic being researched.

### **3.4.2 Observations**

Ethnography is not a quick dip into a research site using surveys and interviews, but encompasses an extended period of time in which the ethnographer immerses him/herself in the community s/he is studying: interacting with community members, observing, building relationships, and participating in community life (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 227). Observing actors, their interactions and the material artefacts in which they engage help ethnographers to explore the everyday business of the organisation. Observing, talking and reading over an extended period of time enables researchers to better understand how a typical organisation operates in real-life contexts (Van Hulst, Ybema & Yanow, 2012, p. 236).

With the foundation of ethnography as a science, being the observation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 6), ethnographies offer detailed and rich or 'thick' descriptions involved observations or coded data, thus offering a snapshot picture of organisational life. In this view, thick descriptions are about micro-interactions in the field, captured through a blend of methods, including visual recordings of interactions and gestures, with researchers attending meetings, participant verbal or written accounts (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 231).

Ethnographers do what it takes to understand meaning-making: spending months onsite observing employees, managers and union representatives, and, for example, spending time at the cafeteria (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 231). What is sought, seen, heard, remembered and recorded, and ultimately reported, requires a point of view or a

stance as to what is of most importance, concern and value in the setting under study, both to the researcher and to the researched (Van Maanen, 2010, p. 339).

Ethnographers are often drawn to the unexpected, the non-routine, the unusual and the sudden changes. Ethnography through observations may thereby allow researchers to capture an organisational reality 'in flight', as they become immersed in the day-to-day, the business-as-usual, and the constant repetition of tasks (Van Hulst *et al.*, 2012, p. 230). They are likely to get an insider view of the qualities of organisational life as well. In working to understand business as usual, they may encounter the more submerged 'flux' of apparently stable routines and institutions, thereby catching reality 'in slumber' (or 'kept in slumber' in, for instance, organisational actors' attempt to secure the status quo). As a method of observation and inquiry, it has the potential to bring into view both apparent stability and hidden flux; both managers' grandiose claims of radical changes and persistent practices and business-as-usual (Van Hulst *et al.*, 2012, p. 230).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 4) further note observations as involving the researcher finding some role in the field being studied. Such an involvement would probably be through implicit and explicit negotiations with the people in the field. In the process, researchers would be instrumental in the researched field, while at the same time, observing ethical conditions.

On this basis, the researcher in the current study, introduced herself to the field workers as an observer interested in their daily work activities. As such, they explained her role as a student, pursuing a master's programme on the topic to which they could probably contribute. The researcher further presented them with an approval letter from the organisation's Country Representative to ensure accountability and confidentiality. The field workers were encouraged to act as naturally as possible, despite the presence of the observer to ensure transparency and a true record of the observed details. Finally, the researcher arrived randomly at the various sites for observations. The sites included static sites and pitched tents in villages and around towns where nurses and counsellors provided HIV/AIDS services to clients.



### 3.4.3 Field notes

Van Maanen (2010, p. 339) views notes as the messy business of trying to write up what has been learned as a result of the time spent in the field. How sense is made and presented of the studied social world, is a task highly dependent on the intellectual resources, moral groundings, emotional states and cultivated curiosities the ethnographer carries to (and from) the scene.

Ethnographers in the midst of fieldwork are expected to write many detailed notes, a necessary activity for tracing the business-as-usual of everyday organisational life. They might, for instance, document organisational procedures, including how much or how often organisational members deviate from those procedures, which at first may have seemed strict guidelines. Field notes can also help ethnographers to bring into view the improvisations and range of daily tasks that keep organisational procedures running smoothly or prevents them from running into the ground. Later on, these field notes that contain detailed descriptions of first hand, field-based observations and experiences, may become the building blocks for working up textual reports on the research. The detailed descriptions enable researchers to better “identify and follow processes in observed events, and hence develop and sustain processual interpretations of happenings in the field” (Van Hulst *et al.*, 2012, p. 225).

Field work means subjecting the self, mind and body, to the set of petty-to-grand contingencies others cope with, so that one can penetrate and appreciate their response to particular social situations. To paraphrase Goffman (1989, p.126), as cited in Van Maanen (2010, p. 339), “If you don’t get yourself in that situation, you can’t do serious work”. Proper fieldwork entails lengthy, first-hand involvement in a social world more or less distinct and distant from one’s own.

Operationally, ethnographers spend, for instance, a few days in the field, wander about the scene, stand around, and talk to a few people who are quite different from themselves, and who hold ideas that in various ways differ from their own. They learn what they can, and then alter the questions they ask or the way in which they ask them, and spend a few more days in the field and meet more people. This process is repeated quite a few times (Van Maanen, 2015, p. 40).

Ethnographers should take notes based on their observations, and they should portray summaries of events, behaviour, what has been heard, and note their perceptions thereof (Bryman, 2004, p. 306). Bryman (2004, p. 308) continues to mention two types of field notes as mental notes that are used when the researcher does not want to be seen taking notes and jotting notes, and brief notes written down on a piece of paper or notebook. Fetterman (2010, p. 116) suggests that “field notes are the brick and mortar of an ethnographic edifice, contain raw data necessary for later, and gives information, ideas and events to analyse later”.

#### **3.4.4 Documentary sources**

There are two sources of data, namely, primary and secondary data. Generally speaking, primary data sources are those data that have not been published and which the researcher has gathered from people and organisations directly, while secondary sources are any materials (books and articles) which have been previously published (Rakotsoane & Rakotsoane, 2007, p. 21).

Maree (2009, p. 83) states that in selecting documents to be included in the study, the following should be verified: the type of document (primary or secondary source), publication date, the purpose of the document, and the research methodology used in producing the document.

The current study used secondary data. The documentary data were collected and reviewed in order to identify the gaps and challenges of the organisation in retaining its employees from different perspectives, namely, that of the employees, the organisation and the environment in which it operates. The following documents were selected: The organisation HR handbook and National staff retention policies.

The HR handbook provided the rules and regulations of the organisation, or operational requirements. The organisational policies entail the processes and procedures that govern the organisation in terms of how they are expected to conduct themselves in a workplace. The organisational archives provided insight into the retention levels in the organisation, the number of people who have left or stayed since 2008 – 2018. It also included the determination of the costs or gains to the company. The researcher also examined the exit forms to determine the alleged reasons for employees leaving the organisation. The study further explored the

stance of the Lesotho government through the Ministry of Health about the ministry's retention policy and the impact thereof on the NGOs, such as the organisation that is the focus of the study.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

Sampling refers to the selection of a subset of persons or things from a larger population, also known as a sampling frame, with the intention of representing a particular population (Scott & Morrison, 2007, p. 219). According to Bryman (2004, p. 304), sampling in ethnographic research is frequently a mixture of convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Rakotsoane and Rakotsoane (2007, p. 27) explain snowball sampling as an approach where the researcher mainly picks people for an interview who are likely to put the researcher in contact with other likely interviewees or respondents so as to be able to gather an essential number of participants. As Etikan, Alkassim and Abubakar (2016, p. 1) pointed out, these initial individuals assist as 'seeds', through which the first wave of subjects is enlisted; the first wave of subject, in turn, enlists the second wave of participants; and the sample accordingly enlarges wave by wave like a snowball growing in size as it rolls down a hill.

The current study used snowball sampling. The team leaders from the following departments were invited to participate as seed:

- Technical services: Human Resources and Research and Measurement & Evaluation office;
- Programmes department: HIV/AIDS Testing Services (HTS), Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC); and
- Corporate services: Finance, Information Technology, Procurement, Administration, Fleet and Warehouse

The employees from the above departments, in turn, nominated or recruited employees to participate in the research, as they knew employees who were likely to contribute significantly to the research. Five (5) employees from each department were purposefully chosen to be interviewed for the study. Three (3) employees from the management team (including executive managers) were chosen for interviews. The participants were purposefully chosen to ensure that every department in the

organisation was represented, and that once the study was completed, no gaps would be left behind.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Flick (2013, p. 5) views qualitative data as describing a subject or an ideology in some or greater detail. Qualitative data analysis is meaning-making of the language (or visual) substance in order to attain logic about the contained information. Qualitative data analysis also implies that a field, structures, or processes in routines and practices could be discovered and described, so that new arenas or frontiers could be discovered through data analysis. Data analysis emanates when information lead to logical research and when results are discovered (Field, 2009). Marshall and Rossman (1999, p. 150) describe data analysis as the procedure of bringing order, construction and denotation to the information. It is labelled as disorganised, vague and demanding, but also as an artistic and a captivating procedure (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150).

Neuman (2007, p. 51) states that semi-structured interviews could be overpowering to researchers, as they produce great quantities of information. However, coding could be used to analyse data. This essentially means classifying groups which fall under related features or ideas (statements or observation) in order to yield a restricted amount of codes or groups. This type of procedure is created essentially to decrease an enormous quantity of information into a manageable amount (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 41).

There are three aspects of data analysis: description, analysis and interpretation. Description refers to the recounting and describing of data, inevitably treating the data as facts. Analysis refers to the process of examining relationships, factors and linkages across the data points. Finally, the interpretation of data builds an understanding or explanation of the data beyond the data points and analysis (Reeves, Springate & Kontopantelis, 2013, p. 1370).

Within the framework of qualitative research, thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data; semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes, the organisation's HR handbook and Lesotho's national staff retention policy.

In principle, thematic analysis pays closer attention to the qualitative aspects of the material being analysed (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, p. 1). Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 52) describe thematic analysis as a process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. Neuendorf (2019, p. 213) explains it as “a way of seeing” and “making sense out of seemingly unrelated material”. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes and patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research, or to say something about an issue in focus.

Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p. 54) further describe the steps of thematic analysis as becoming familiar with the data and generation of codes, which are put in clearly sequentially or systematically. As such, the purpose is to search for themes, reviewing them to make sure there is sense, coherence and independence. Finally, the themes should be defined and written.

Thematic analysis is considered as the most appropriate for any study which seeks to discover using interpretations. It provides a systematic element to data analysis. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme within the whole content. This would confer accuracy and intricacy, and enhance the whole meaning of the study. Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects of the data. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts, and compare them with the replicated data (Ibrahim, 2012, p. 40).

### **3.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

One of the strengths of qualitative research is the capacity for in-depth analysis.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is a philosophical subject which guides people on how to conduct themselves, and it illuminates the norms or standards of behaviour of people and relationships during interaction. It refers to an “ethos” or “way of life”, “social norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour” (Shah, 2011, p.205; Akaranga & Ongong’a, 2013, p.8, as cited in Akaranga & Makau, 2016, p. 1).

Since ethnographic research uses real stories from real people, there are specific standards to be followed before an interaction begins. Beforehand researchers should seek consent from the participants and make their research goals clear to the members of the community or stakeholders where they intend to undertake the research (Genzok, 2003, p. 10). To have the participants' consent is the crucial part of the research process. The consent process includes asking for their permission to participate in the research project, by fully stipulating the purpose and methods of the research, how and where the data will be used, if there is any gain for them in the process, and how their confidentiality could be safeguarded. It is imperative to maintain participants' confidentiality so as to protect their rights (Asher & Miller, 2011, p. 16). (The participants' consent forms are included in Annexure D.)

Researchers would not want to create an ethnographic record which can expose the people who shared their time and experiences so generously to serve their research. To protect such information pseudonyms and codes or shorthand can be used. In some rare cases, researchers find it risky to record and report some information, no matter how interesting or important, as it outweighs the research objectives. Many ethnographers probably have had the same encounter, but their roles as researchers should be cognisant when creating an ethnographic record (Murchison, 2010, p. 80).

Research projects should rigorously follow ethical considerations when dealing with human participants. According to Alshenqeeti (2014, p. 44) a high standard of ethical considerations should be observed, as interviews are considered an intrusion into respondents' private lives with regard to time allotted and level of sensitivity of questions asked. This implies that during the interview process ethical issues should be considered at all the stages. That is, before participating in an interview, participants should present their informed consent (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 44). Research ethics require that information and subjects being researched are important and should be protected with dignity and be published well (Akaranga & Makau, 2016, p. 2).

During the research process, the researcher should assure the respondents that the information will be kept confidential. If the researcher should wish to reveal any information for research purposes, consent should be sought from the respondents. This harnesses honesty between the two parties and protects from physical and

psychological harm due to unexpected questions that might shock the respondent (Akaranga & Makau, 2016, p. 7). Mugenda (2003) asserts that a voluntary and informed consent is one of the major ethical issues in conducting research. This implies the fact that “a person knowingly, voluntarily, intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his or her information truthfully” (Akaranga & Makau, 2016, p. 7). This will inform the respondents’ decisions to participate in a study, including understanding the benefit and risks of the study. This will also guide the respondent in dealing with any form of physical harm or discomfort, infringement of dignity and privacy and compensation (Akaranga & Makau, 2016, p. 7).

Ethical guidelines and standards as stipulated by the University of South Africa formed the basis for this study. According to the Policy on Research Ethics (2016, p. 12), researchers should ensure that the personal information of participants used for research purposes is adequately protected to prevent possible loss, damage and/or unauthorised access as required by the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, No. 4 of 2013. (See Annexure A for the study’s Ethical Clearance Certificate.)

The conduct of research was honest, fair and transparent. This study used the Population Services International - Lesotho consent form to conduct the research on its employees by signing an oath of confidentiality form with the organisation in accordance with the human resource manual. (See Annexure B for the permission to conduct research letter.)

This study adhered to all the ethics principles of UNISA, as listed in Section 1.9.

### **3.9 CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter presented the research methodology which was employed in this study. The systematic steps involved in carrying out the research were discussed, and the research approaches, research design and methodology were presented. The methods of collecting data by means of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentary sources were also explained in this chapter. The researcher further discussed thematic analytic frameworks, as well as ethical considerations for this study. The next chapter presents the data collected and the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the analyses of the data collected for this study. Firstly, the chapter presents the background of the participants, identifying the challenges facing the organisation in terms of staff retention. Secondly, the chapter considers the findings as shown in tables, thus analysing and discussing the themes and patterns related to the research questions and objectives of this study.

### **4.2 BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

Fifteen participants were interviewed for the current study. From the fifteen participants, three were part of management, one represented the HR department, and 13 were from the HIV and AIDS Testing Services (HTS) and Corporate Services (CS) departments.

The following section presents the observations made by the researcher at the HTS sites and fieldwork, VMMC site, and management and corporate services at the organisation offices. The researcher also reviewed and discussed the answers of the participants from the semi-structured interviews, the HR manual and the Lesotho government policy about staff retention in their identified themes.

The participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity when reporting the findings of the study. The pseudonyms allocated to each participant are presented in Table 4.1 below.



Table 4.1

*Participants' pseudonyms*

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>
Participant 1	Mpho
Participant 2	Relebohile
Participant 3	Thabo
Participant 4	Teboho
Participant 5	Neo
Participant 6	Puseletso
Participant 7	Pule
Participant 8	Thabiso
Participant 9	Retšelisitsoe
Participant 10	Kou
Participant 11	Leseli
Participant 12	Karabo
Participant 13	Qenehelo
Participant 14	Thato
Participant 15	Palesa

**4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

As noted earlier, semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data from the participants. These interviews involved a description of the participants' experiences as well as a reflection on the description. Accordingly, the researcher provides the context of the interviews in Table 4.2 by using the field log during the individual interviews which were conducted with the participants. The extracts from the interviews bear the participant pseudonyms, the interview number, the page number and the paragraph number as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2  
Context of the interviews

Participant	Interview context
Mpho	<p>Mpho is a married female in her mid-40s. She is the senior officer, and has worked in the organisation for three years. At the time of interview, she was working in the programmes department; she had just obtained her Doctor of Philosophy degree.</p> <p>Mpho showed great enthusiasm for the interview which was held in the organisation's boardroom after working hours, thus free from any interruptions. Mpho expressed satisfaction with her job and management. She seemed grateful for her job and was looking forward to more years with the organisation. Amidst her apparent happiness, she expressed her discontentment with the salary structures of the organisation, more especially that of her qualifications not being recognised.</p> <p><i>"...I have been holding this position with a master's degree but with the salary that I think a diploma or a degree person could earn."</i> (Mpho (1): p. 2:2).</p> <p>Towards the end of the interview, I could feel Mpho's excitement die down, taking longer to answer questions. By the end of the interview, Mpho concluded that if she had any choice she would leave for another organisation, as noted below:</p> <p><i>"Comparatively it can be easier to work elsewhere..."</i> (Mpho (1): p. 3:6).</p>
Relebohile	<p>Relebohile is an assistant in the corporate department who holds a diploma and is in her late 20s. She is married and had worked for the organisation for four years at the time of interview.</p> <p>Relebohile works at one of the organisation's sites in Maseru, and I had to travel to meet her. The interview was held early before business hours in one of the offices to avoid interruptions. She had shown hesitation to participate in the interview but finally agreed. I could sense tension and a little bit of aggression when the interview started but she finally warmed up.</p> <p>Relebohile seemed frustrated by her job. She felt being overworked for long hours, with little or no recognition from her supervisors and management. She thought her colleagues had better opportunities than she had because of favouritism.</p> <p>Even though Relebohile expressed so much anger about her job, she did not feel like leaving the organisation as it was her first job, and she felt uncomfortable with what she might find outside.</p>
Thabo	<p>Thabo, in his late 30s, is a divorced man, who holds a first degree. He has worked for the organisation for four years, currently as an officer in the corporate department. The interview was held in the boardroom after office hours.</p> <p>Thabo seemed relaxed and eager to answer questions. The fact that I work with Thabo in the office made it easier for the conversation to flow and to create a conducive mood. Thabo was motivated and loved his job. To him, the management would not, any time soon, desire to learn and make the working environment any better.</p> <p>Thabo expressed his satisfaction with his performance, also feeling he had</p>

Participant	Interview context
	<p>more to offer but was limited to his desk. He, however, strongly felt that his supervisor made him perform adequately. He stated as follows:</p> <p><i>"I'm being supported by my supervisor, the kind of leadership style she uses she will support you and see to it that you get all the resources you need to complete your task"</i> (Thabo (3): p. 2:10).</p>
Teboho	<p>Teboho is a married man in his mid-40s, who is working as a senior officer in the programmes department. He is also a first degree holder with eight years' working experience in the organisation.</p> <p>Teboho did not show any emotions about the interview. He looked passive and indifferent to the session. Teboho expressed his satisfaction with the job and performance in general. He was satisfied with the management and the operations of the organisation. As a long-term serving employee, Teboho was apparently not that ambitious about working at any other place than the current organisation.</p> <p><i>"Because I have worked here for more than five years I can say I can work here because I don't know any other company than this one, so I prefer to be here"</i> (Teboho (4): p. 2:11).</p>
Neo	<p>Neo is a female divorcee in her early 30s. She holds a diploma and works in the department of corporate services. Neo has been in the company for three years, serving as an assistant.</p> <p>Neo feels like there is a lot right about the organisation. She feels supported by her supervisor and represented well in management meetings. Neo displays a very content front with her job, except for particular areas such as her salary and duties. She feels like she is doing her duties and those of others.</p> <p><i>"...I'm working on two positions - we don't have the admin officer at the moment and all his duties I'm doing..."</i> (Neo (5): p. 2:2).</p> <p>Neo frequently answers every question in reference to her previous job. She seemingly considered her previous organisation to be better than the current organisation. During the interview, Neo mentioned her readiness to leave the organisation in a heartbeat, back to her old organisation which was closed down due to financial constraints.</p>
Puseletso	<p>Puseletso is a female divorcee in her late 20s. She has just been promoted to the senior officer position in the programmes department, having been in the organisation for two years.</p> <p>Puseletso was enthusiastic coming to the interview that was held in the researcher's office after working hours. Puseletso could not wait to be interviewed, as she regularly checked with the researcher about her turn. She described her passion for her job, and excitement about her newly promoted position. She expressed her satisfaction with management inclusion in her area of expertise. She loved the environment and the people with whom she worked. Puseletso thought the organisation was ideal for the season she found herself in and would not change jobs even if she was offered another job elsewhere.</p>
Pule	<p>Pule, who has worked in the organisation for five years, is an officer in the programmes department. He is a married and is in his mid-30s, holding a first</p>

Participant	Interview context
	<p>degree.</p> <p>Even though he agreed to participate in the interview, Pule had to be probed for a long time to give relevant answers to the questions. Pule considered his efforts to be unappreciated by the management. His concern was over what he considered non-consultative practices by the management on decision-making processes. He thought training and development policies were not adequately practised. He complained about his salary and bias on the part of the organisation in recruiting employees.</p> <p>Pule only comes to work because he has to earn a living.</p> <p><i>“...because there are no jobs.”</i> (Pule (7): p. 9:3).</p>
Thabiso	<p>Thabiso is a single male, an officer in the programmes department. He is in his early 30s, holding a first degree with a four-year working experience in the organisation.</p> <p>The interview was held in Thabiso’s office after hours. He seemed rushed and wanted us to finish. I also felt like he wanted to say what he thought I wanted to hear. I had to probe him further to validate his responses.</p> <p>However, my impression was that Thabiso was not that genuine about the responses given me about his work environment. He expressed his contentment with the organisation, stating that he was not expecting much from it.</p> <p>Thabiso expressed his happiness about the job and work for the organisation.</p> <p><i>“One of the things which made me work in this organisation is to get exposure. It is a big organisation and if you work here you get a lot of experience. It makes you grow, especially when I look at the work which I am currently doing, I think I'm exposed, I've grown a lot.”</i> (Thabiso (8): p. 4:10).</p>
Retšelisitsoe	<p>Retšelisitsoe is a married male, a first degree holder, working as a senior officer in the corporate services. He is in his mid-30s, having served the organisation for three years.</p> <p>The interview was held in the organisation’s boardroom, late after office hours. Retšelisitsoe was very particular about his dissatisfaction with the processes of the organisation. He pointed to the policies that mainly benefited management.</p> <p>Retšelisitsoe appeared to be dissatisfied about his salary, grudgingly explaining how his salary could not match his workload. He expressed how he had to work twice as much, as there is no training provided for the employees and he had to learn the systems by himself. He, however, considered himself to be performing well under the circumstances.</p> <p>He appreciated the recruitment process, which for him, was conducted fairly when he was he was hired. Retšelisitsoe considered the organisation to have potential, despite feeling abandoned by it and people because of the competitive industry.</p> <p><i>“These organisations do compete. They compete for skilled labour...”</i> (Retšelisitsoe (9): p. 9:10).</p>

Participant	Interview context
Kou	<p>Kou is a married man in his early 40s, holding a COSC qualification. He has worked for three years as an assistant in the programmes department of the organisation.</p> <p>Kou appeared very humbled, with respectful answers to the questions asked. He looked reserved, yet assertive when expressing his thoughts. The interview was held in the researcher's office at lunch time. There was a post on the door written "Meeting in progress" to avoid any disturbance by any other employees. For confidentiality purposes there had been multiple meetings held in that particular office since the morning and the paper was kept on the door. Since Kou was working in the far districts, the researcher had to maximise the time available.</p> <p>Kou expressed his fondness for his job because of the impact it has on the communities served. He considered himself to be performing satisfactorily, except for a few mistakes along the way.</p> <p>However, Kou could not appreciate what he saw as dictatorial practices by the management.</p> <p><i>"I'm not sure which decisions or at what level but generally I have a slight feeling that we are being dictated to. We are not given an opportunity to say, to suggest or how do you see this. For instance, we have a problem that we are being told that we should come to work at 06:00 o'clock, without being asked our concerns about it, without being involved in such decisions; we would only told to come to work a early as 06:00am the following day regardless of any individual plans or problems. Ok I'm taking my own children to school, at 06:30 maybe you always go with your family and take them you are just told the next day that you are going to come to work at 06:00." (Kou (10): p. 1:7).</i></p> <p>Kou felt that there was zero support for all activities from the management. He was, however, happy about the benefits and the salary he was receiving from the organisation.</p>
Leseli	<p>Leseli is in his late 20s, single, and was working as an officer in the corporate services department. He is a degree holder with three years' experience in the organisation.</p> <p>Leseli had recently been transferred from the HQ site to a district site at the time of the interview. His answers were more in line with what was happening at the sites, as opposed to what had been happening at the HQ.</p> <p>He expressed how some sites are more favoured than others in terms of resources, employee training sessions, promotions and salaries. Leseli felt excluded from the decision-making processes of the organisation, also noting no support from the management, even when performing satisfactorily.</p> <p>He believed that the management are just looking out for themselves, especially regarding employee benefits.</p> <p>Leseli kept confusing my role as a student with that of a co-worker, and had to be reminded frequently of my role as an interviewer.</p>
Karabo	<p>Karabo is a married female and a senior officer in her mid-40s. She is a first degree holder, having worked for two years, currently in the programmes department.</p>

Participant	Interview context
	<p>Karabo anticipated that the interview would be conducted in the organisation's boardroom, after working hours to avoid any interruptions and for confidentiality reasons. The date for the interview had been set, so when the time drew near she called several times to check if the interview was still on.</p> <p>Karabo is passionate about her job. She explained how her job was a higher calling with an impact on people's lives. She loved the vision of the organisation, something which had kept her coming to work every day. Although outperforming her work, she considered the organisation to be over-working her talents and skills because of the way the structure of her job was presented. Karabo attributed the high staff turnover to low staff morale within and the low salaries of the organisation.</p> <p><i>"Staff morale, there is very low staff morale. I think also that salaries are not attractive, so [the focal organisation] has been losing people more than any other organisations". (Karabo (12): p. 5:3).</i></p> <p>He further observed the way in which employees' mistakes were handled by the organisation, that is, seeing the organisation as quicker to discipline and expel people rather than dealing amicably with them.</p>
Qenehelo	<p>Qenehelo is a married female, in her early 40s, holding a master's degree. She has been working for the organisation for four years, currently as a manager in the programmes department.</p> <p>During the interview, Qenehelo presented a confident character. She came across as a motivated person who believes in her performance and brings expected results. Qenehelo's answers were well thought out and articulated. She was careful about what she would say, apparently having rehearsed her responses. While I could not determine how genuine she was, she approached the interview strategically.</p> <p>Qenehelo believed in the processes and implementation of policies, especially the training and development policy. In her view, policies would empower her staff to perform and deliver their daily targets. She also emphasised the importance of regular refresher courses for staff, for the purpose of improving performance within the organisation.</p> <p>Qenehelo was not happy with the salary structures and benefits of the organisation. She believed that the management salaries are not competitive with the market, that is why there is high staff turnover.</p> <p><i>"I think in terms of benefits I will specifically talk of medical aid, I think it's not enough. The organisation should look at it in totality and review; I think one thousand and two hundred is very low to afford a good medical care; besides, medical care and other benefits are fine. In terms of salary structure I think as the organisation may be can tap to different studies that had been done in relation to salaries just to bench mark our salary skill if it's marketable enough. I don't think we are yet there, also looking at the burden, for instance if you look at the manager who is technical and what is the burden like and is the salary and the benefits combined, market-related I don't think we are yet there as the organisation." (Qenehelo: (13): p. 5:4).</i></p>

Participant	Interview context
Thato	<p>Thato is a married female, and a senior manager in the corporate services department. She is in her mid-40s, has a post-graduate diploma and has worked for the organisation for five years.</p> <p>Thato mentioned her demotivation to perform as a manager that stems from the organisational environment. She, however, complained that the workload was heavy, working under pressure because of poor planning which compromises the quality of the work being produced.</p> <p><i>“There is poor planning at work because, for example, there was an issue of budget last week that management knew about though it was demanded without notifying them to prepare it. We could not even think of what to write, sometimes you may realise later that you forgot some items after you have submitted the budget.”</i> [Translated] (Thato (14): p. 2:4).</p> <p>Thato believes the training and development policy is non-existent.</p> <p><i>“Never has the organisation offered any training which could be beneficial to the management since I have worked in the organisation. Surprisingly, you would only hear about a training budget at the time you are asked to do it, not even knowing the company which offers the training and how much money is needed and this makes the management incompetent.”</i> [Translated] (Thato (14): p. 2:4).</p> <p>Thato mentioned her preferred styles of leadership as consultative leadership, laissez fair and employee engagement. If need be, she would choose any, depending on the character of her supervisees.</p> <p>Thato believes most of the organisation’s processes and policies need work, the culture is toxic and needs to change, and the organisation is 70% her employer of choice.</p>
Palesa	<p>Palesa is a female, in her early 40s, and a senior manager working in the corporate services department. She has a master’s degree, and is a widow who has been in the organisation for six years.</p> <p>I struggled tremendously to secure an interview with Palesa. We could agree on the date but Palesa kept on rescheduling because of her hectic work schedule. The interview was held a month after other participants had already done theirs. I felt frustrated to change the participants but one unexpected day she invited me to come to her office for an interview. I gladly cancelled my plans and went to her office, after office hours.</p> <p>Palesa was a welcoming person. During the interview she was happy to talk about her work and her position in the organisation. She expressed hope in her job and believed that the organisation is on the journey of improvement. Palesa saw the organisation as having no retention strategy in place, and that if she had any chance she would improve that outlook.</p> <p><i>“So for me if I had chance especially looking at the fact that each department has a manager I would say each manager should draw some sort of criteria to say under your department how do you consider maybe a high performance like it can be a finance HR like have a criteria because we need to recognise people not necessarily in terms of promotion but that motivation whether maybe is through any certificate that you can give to say looking at your past six</i></p>

Participant	Interview context
	<i>months like now we are in the period of mid-year review; this is what we have observed, so anything that can come up with criteria to say each department across let's ensure that we can recognise high performance put responsibility to the managers so for them they will be recognised up there because finally if a manager is performing well is because of subordinates below because it's not everything that we can do."</i> (Palesa (15): p. 7:2).

#### 4.4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted in the NGO whose main operation is testing for HIV/AIDS, thus focusing on the challenges of staff retention in Lesotho. A total of 15 participants were identified using snowball sampling. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews which were held at intervals.

The data were also collected from the Human Resource Manual of the organisation, and the Government of Lesotho National Policy on retention of staff in the health sector. Drawing on the theory, the data were sub-categorised into themes in order to highlight the different sections of staff retention.

A table of superordinate and subordinate themes was drawn up in which each theme was illustrated by a few verbatim extracts from the interviews (see Table 4.3). In the sections that follow, each superordinate and subordinate theme is interpreted in turn, using examples of the individual participants' experiences as described in the interview transcripts.



Table 4.3  
Themes and codes

Theme	Code	Verbatim extracts from interviews
<b>1. Workplace environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tasks</li> <li>– Equipment</li> <li>– Hazards</li> <li>– Personal Protective equipment</li> <li>– Economic concerns and workspace</li> <li>– Travel equipment</li> <li>– Safety</li> </ul>	<p><i>“For instance, even the whole of yesterday we did not have any water. I do not have a space or an office, I just sit at the reception.” (Leseli (11): p. 1:8).</i></p> <p><i>“As I have mentioned, even the controls here in the organisation, I do not want to work in an environment with too strict control.. As you know, we are not allowed to remain behind when our supervisors have left the workplace, so it is a restriction for me from studying and to further my knowledge of accounting so I always find it as something which is not working well for me.” (Retšelisitsoe (9): p. 3:1).</i></p>
<b>2. Decision-making processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Inclusion/exclusion</li> <li>– Identifying priorities</li> <li>– Access to information</li> <li>– Day-to-day discretion</li> <li>– Client vetting and management</li> <li>– Consequence management</li> </ul>	<p><i>“I receive information with which I’m able to make decisions and find that most of the decisions which I make are helpful to the organisation, so I think I’m included.” (Mpho (1): p. 1:4).</i></p> <p><i>“No, the culture here, the management or the Executive Management Team, are the ones who are responsible for decision- making; Having been here for almost three years, I have never been involved in any decision-making. I think there ought to be consultation before decisions can be made, but it doesn’t happen here.” (Thabo (3): p. 1:6).</i></p>
<b>3. Job performance and management support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Job description</li> <li>– KPI processes</li> <li>– Performance assessment and management</li> <li>– Management reporting and support</li> <li>– Grievance processes</li> </ul>	<p><i>“If they don’t reach their targets normally we do performance review... The supervisor will decide with the employee to choose a different spot and monitor its performing, also looking at their weekly performance.” (Qenehelo (13): p. 4:2).</i></p> <p><i>“I can’t really say they support because they do things according to their ideologies, not what they are supposed to do.” (Relebohile (2): p. 4:5).</i></p> <p><i>“...I’m being supported by my supervisor; the kind of leadership style she uses is that of supporting you and seeing to it that you get all the resources you need to complete your task. As for the management, no like I said earlier there are no training and development facilities...” (Thabo (3): p. 2:10).</i></p>

Theme	Code	Verbatim extracts from interviews
<b>4. Data on salary structure and benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Salary scales</li> <li>– Promotion management</li> <li>– Benefits</li> <li>– Leave management</li> <li>– Medical aid</li> <li>– Allowances</li> </ul>	<p><i>“The benefits, I will say, just from what I heard outside, the PSI is good in terms of the benefits, especially the provident fund, but salaries really look like we are not there...” (Palesa (15): p. 7:4).</i></p> <p><i>“I think in terms of benefits, I would specifically talk about medical aid, which I think, is not enough.” (Qenehelo (14): p. 4:2).</i></p> <p><i>“...HR manual or something and there was this section whereby it talked about some of the benefits, especially...the moment I saw that, I was like is it going to apply to everyone? Unfortunately, it was still for the managers...There is also a huge margin from an assistant to an officer to a manager, maybe or the senior officer; there is that huge gap in terms of salaries.” (Leseli (11): p. 4:9).</i></p>
<b>5. Recruitment, training and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advertising</li> <li>– Selection</li> <li>– Placement</li> <li>– Training</li> <li>– Staff development and leave associated</li> </ul>	<p><i>“Yes, it’s fair and transparent, if jobs are being advertised, from the advertisement people are selected based on the advertised post.” (Mpho (1): p. 2:8).</i></p> <p><i>“At no time does the organisation offer training which is beneficial to the management ever since I have worked in the organisation.” (Thato (14): p. 2:3).</i></p> <p><i>“In a nutshell, neither training nor development exists here.” (Thabo (3): p. 1:4).</i></p>
<b>6. Talent management and motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Life course career management</li> <li>– Succession planning</li> <li>– Headhunting</li> <li>– Exit management and processes</li> </ul>	<p><i>“Because even if you want to move from one department to another, you will be denied the opportunity to do that only because the management would not approve of that; we are kept under strict controls, thereby only having to do whatever they require of us.” (Relebohile (2): p. 5:2).</i></p> <p><i>“Not that much because if they were maximised I could have been asked what other things I could do for the organisation because I can help with stress management; for instance, in groups or in cadres, as I would try to assist with stress management.” (Mpho (1): p. 2:9).</i></p> <p><i>“...For anybody who is still employed elsewhere, our salary structures are not that attractive basing ourselves on the market; people could not leave their jobs or work places for the PSI. So chances of attracting highly people or those with relevant skills would be so minimal.” (Qenehelo (13): p. 6:3).</i></p>

#### 4.5 THEME 1: WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The workplace environment can be a determining factor in the longevity of employees in an organisation. The workplace environment consists of office buildings, their furniture, and layout. It is the environment in which people work, that is, the physical setting or the characteristics of the job itself, workload and task complexity (Duru & Shimawua, 2017, p. 26). It is important to identify those elements that drive employees to appreciate and be committed to their workplace (Akeyo & Wezel, 2017, p. 52).

The study shows that most participants pronounced their happiness about the work environment, as exemplified by the following statement:

Mpho (1): p. 1:6: *"I am happy about what and where I am"*.

However, some feel that the organisation cannot be seen as the ideal workplace that would treat lower-level employees in the same way as higher-level employees.

Thabo (3): p. 1:4: *"Well, the environment is not ideal to be fair and just....."*.

Some respondents were ambivalent about the organisation being an ideal workplace. Their work in this organisation is seen as a fulfilment of their ambition and performance; for them it is also the human ideal of helping other less fortunate members of society. Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 52) assert that a good environment is necessary to retain employees. Identifying the elements which drive employees to appreciate and be committed to the workplace is important. For example, the following statement illustrates this:

Pule (7): p. 1:8: *"..... it is always good to be helping people, and mostly for clients who are sick, helping them from that state of illness and seeing them well, and healthier so it is quite an achievement to see them being in that better state"*.

If negatively perceived, a work environment can cause job stress, lack of commitment in the organisation, and job dissatisfaction makes employees quit (Firth *et al.*, 2004, p. 6), as stipulated below:

Relebohile (2): p. 1:14: *“Because sometimes you find it hard to work because you see a lot of favouritism, and it makes hard for you to work when you work in such an environment.”*

In project-oriented organisations there is no certainty of growing in one's career as the funding duration is normally short-term, and funds or opportunities to support the development of human resources' capacity are normally few or not available (Batti, 2014, p. 91). This is also true for the focal organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho. According to Friedman (2007), an international culture has been found to impose on the national culture in multinational organisations. The ability to implement best practices in a way that is acceptable in local situations and which aligns with different cultural and business environments is, partly, the domain of HRM (Friedman, 2007), as articulated by Relebohile below:

Retšelisitsoe (9): p. 1:12&13: *“Personally, I do not want to work in the environment whereby there is too much control of what I do. The PSI Lesotho, as you know, is one of international branches. So it operates basically on standards. If the operation we do with finance is standardised and I mean is that what we do in Lesotho is what is being done by other branches of the PSI.*

*So there is little room for you to apply your creativity because you have to follow the standard operating procedures even you see some of them do not specifically address your situation but you have to follow. So this kind of environment to me, is something which kills my creativity and innovation. Because even when I think I have my way of doing things which can work for me, sometimes I am bound by the standard operating procedures which I can derail from.”*

For others, the experience of working for the organisation depends largely on the location of their work station. The organisation's Head Quarters (HQ) is perceived to be a more ideal work environment than the enrolment sites in the peripheral districts.

Leseli (11): p. 1:6: *“Well at first since I have been working here at the HQ, now based at the site, the nature or the enrolment at the site is not user-*

*friendly”. “Not really because this management are not at the sites; nor do they feel what we feel.”*

Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 52) state that extensive scientific research conducted by Roelofsen (2002) has shown that a conducive working environment increases work satisfaction, attendance and productivity, which contradicts what the researcher observed at the organisation's sites. The researcher observed the HTS staff arriving at their work stations as early as 6 a.m. in the morning, the drivers would sit and wait for the staff to pack their tents, chairs and backpacks into the car, no segregation of toilets. One toilet was used by both males and females. There was no air-conditioning observed at the sites, neither was tea or coffee supplied.

In rare cases, the staff would arrive as late as six to seven in the evening. Upon staff's arrival at the sites, the researcher witnessed that staff would unload their tents, chairs and backpacks from the vehicles to the storeroom. It was a lot of heavy lifting required from staff which consisted of mostly women, regardless of physical or pregnancy status. When it was cold, the staff would bask in the sun to heat their bodies before getting ready to welcome clients, and when it was hot, the employees would shield themselves from the sun or sit under a tree. No toilet facilities were seen to be allocated to the employees, nor was there any clean water provided.

As motivation theorists observed, an organisation can retain its best brains by implementing strategies that will motivate them. This theory is rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943, p. 1). Safety needs are activated after physiological needs are met. They refer to the need for a secure working environment free from any threats or harm.

The rationale is that employees working in an environment free of harm do their jobs without any fear of harm (Kaur, 2013, p. 1062). Hyun (2009, p. 9) explains Herzberg's two factor theory that working conditions should be desirable, health and hazard conscious, and conducive to all employees. Daly and Dee (2006) structure a work environment as one of the variables of the expectancy theory which determines the longevity of an employee in the organisation. This is true to the HQ staff. The HQ office space was observed adequate by the researcher to accommodate employees, with air conditioning in every office, good office space, well-furnished and complete with the necessary appliances. The facilities that employees used were seen to be

used by management. There was no selective treatment given to management employees, even in terms of office space. The HQ staff had a more conducive environment, thus experiencing minimum staff turnover.

The organisation's HR Manual depicts the health and safety and confidentiality measures relevant to its employees and are tabulated as follows: the organisation provides fire extinguishers, employees who will be exposed to any process or substance that is likely to cause personal bodily injury, or impairment of health shall be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment and accessories.

Zafir (2012, p. 640) asserts that an optimal workplace design is where the workplace has structured jobs, the match between worker ability and job demands, human-machine system design and appropriate management programmes. Cunningham (2002, p. 32) adds by stating the following components as part of an ideal workplace environment; a positive work environment where employees are recognised and rewarded for good performance, where there is good communication, and where everyone shares in the excitement of being part of a successful organisation. Even though the focal organisation depicts parts of the good environment factors, it is seen as lacking in other aspects, which suggests that the employees are not enjoying the full benefits of the environment of which they form part.

The government of Lesotho's retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 29) expresses the workplace environment as supportive supervision, as the quality of the supervision received by employees is critical to employee retention. People leave managers and supervisors more often than they leave companies or jobs. A strengthening of the information systems and a well-functioning Health (Management) Information System (HMIS/HIS) constitute some of the essential building blocks of the WHO HSS Framework. The WHO defines a 'well-functioning HIS' as being one which ensures the production, analysis, dissemination and use of reliable and timely health information by decision-makers at different levels of the health system, both on a regular basis and in emergencies, management support. Due attention by management to individuals demonstrates good management, and has the potential to improve quality of care as it plays an important role as a motivational force amongst the workers. In terms of communication and information; employees are motivated by receiving timely information and communication which

may affect them personally, such as changes in government policy, conditions of service and new circulars. The retention strategy of the government of Lesotho through the health workforce expresses a more clear concept regarding the development of an ideal workplace for health workers.

#### **4.6 THEME 2: DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

The Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (2017, p. 35) asserts that a suggestions' and complaints' system should be developed to retain employees in organisations. This system represents the employees' voice at the entity. This would increase the employees' confidence and enhance their participation in the system. For example,

Leseli (11): p. 4:1: *"...I believe even if we can have this kind of discussions with us, then anonymously one puts this form inside the suggestion box."*

In a study of staff turnover in relief aid agencies, James (2004, p. 37) outlined poor involvement of staff in decision-making as one of the reasons for staff turnover. Employee involvement in decision-making boosts employee morale and confidence.

Mpho(1): p. 1:4: *"I feel like I am included because what is basically important is that there are a lot of times that I receive information and with that information I'm able to make decisions and find that most of the decision that I make are helpful to the organisation so I think I'm included"*.

Teboho (4): p. 1:6: *"Yes I can be included. We have staff meetings, supervisors' meetings where we can also contribute and give our opinions, yes I'm included"*.

Some participants pointed out the issue of impartiality in their responses, though they were inconsistent, as illustrated below:

Neo (5): p. 1:8: *"I'm partly included because the decisions which are made in most cases are for the benefit of all the staff even though some could feel like they are not benefiting but I think they are all borne in mind"*.

However, some participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the organisation, claiming that the management centralised decision-making processes, excluding and leaving the employees in the dark. For example:

Leseli (11): p. 2:12: *“Not really because...these people, the management are not at the sites, they do not feel what we are feeling”.*

Kou (10): p. 1:7: *“I’m not sure which decisions or at what level but generally I have some feeling that we are being dictated to”.*

It is important to note the segregation of answers by the participants. Most employees who have asserted their inclusion in the decision-making are senior officers, while most who felt excluded were officers and assistants. Lukwago *et al.* (2015, p. 279) stipulate one of the hygiene factors and motivators should be the involvement of employees in decision-making, as in Herzberg’s two-factor theory. Hygiene factors are those job factors which are essential for the existence of motivation at the workplace. These do not lead to positive satisfaction for the long-term. However, if these factors are absent or if these factors are non-existent at the workplace, then they lead to dissatisfaction. It could, therefore, be argued that the majority of employees who hold lower positions in the organisation are dissatisfied at work (Lukwago *et al.*, 2015, p. 279). The following is illustrative:

Retšelisitsoe (9): p. 4:1: *“...control has not considered the needs of employees at the lower level”.*

The organisation’s HR Manual depicts nothing of necessity about the inclusion of employees in the decision-making processes of the organisation. However, the employees’ action or reaction is encouraged in the disciplinary proceedings of the organisation and the grievance procedures (The organisation HR manual, 2018, p. 32). For example the manual states:

*“The policy, therefore, clearly stipulates conduct regarded as misconduct within the PSI, outlines a process which promotes an open dialogue to resolve conflicts and lays down disciplinary measures to be imposed for acts of misconduct”. “If the employee is not satisfied with the decision, he*



*may, within five (5) days, appeal and request a meeting with the Human Resources Manager”.*

The government of Lesotho retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 39) asserts that the decentralisation of human resource management leads to a better health workforce in rural areas through the creation of additional revenue for the health sector and better use of existing financial resources. Studies conducted by the government show that health workers are generally more motivated in ‘decentralised districts’ where more decisions are taken at district and facility level.

Presently, in the Lesotho public health sector, promotion, career progress and transfers are all done at a central level. There is a need for greater autonomy by the districts. Recently, managers interviewed in government hospitals mentioned the lack of autonomy they have in relation to staff recruitment, continuous education and training, salaries or benefits, supervision and termination of employment (The government of Lesotho Retention Strategy for the Health Workforce, 2011, p. 39).

Recent studies show that stress and burnout of health workers is less of a problem in decentralised districts, and the staff employed in these districts scored significantly higher on personal accomplishment, lower on emotional exhaustion, and lower on depersonalisation scales than those in the non-decentralised districts (The government of Lesotho retention strategy for the health workforce, 2011, p. 39). The decision by the government to decentralise decision-making in rural service delivery has proven to be fruitful and has increased staff motivation.

However, the urban areas are experiencing more fatigue and burnout, if compared to their counterparts. The notion signifies the difference between included and excluded employees in decision-making processes. Retention can be practised better by motivating the employees regarding the aspects of open communication which enforces loyalty among the employees. Open communication tends to keep employees informed on key issues. Most importantly, they need to know that their opinions matter and that management is 100% interested in their input (Federal Authority for Government Human Resources, 2017, p. 35).

#### 4.7 THEME 3: JOB PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Low performance and ineffectiveness in organisations are a result of high staff turnover, which results in high costs and negative outcomes (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 17). The expectancy theory has three key elements: expectancy, instrumentality and valence (Vroom, 1964). A person is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that (a) efforts will lead to acceptable performance (expectancy); (b) performance will be rewarded (instrumentality); and (c) the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence) (De Simone, 2015, p. 20).

During the interviews, the participants articulated a high level of acceptance related to their performance and managerial support in their individual areas of work. For example:

Thabo (3): p. 2:4: *"I think I'm performing quite well, looking at the circumstances I will be facing".*

Thabo (3): p. 2:10: *"They are partly, I'm being supported by my supervisor the kind of leadership style she uses she will support you and see to it that you get all the resources you need to complete your task".*

Teboho (4): p. 1:8 *"We are performing very good because we are the number one in terms of indexing ever since we introduce indexing in Mafeteng we are always the best we are doing a good job is another target of our donors even the site itself is performing well in general."*

The good performance output portrayed by the participants would be aligned with the support they receive from their supervisors. This is related to how people's beliefs about their ability to successfully perform a behaviour affect their motivation. The greater the self-efficacy, the greater the motivation and performance (Jones & George, 2009, p. 484). Failure by management to equip employees with skills to perform well may demotivate employees. This is made clear in some of the answers provided by the participants during the interview, as illustrated below:

Karabo (12): p. 3:13: *The top management is not supporting the issue of procurement planning or budgeting".*

Managers and employees are required to develop performance targets and output that define individual tasks. However, many staff and management acknowledged that this process does not exist in their organisations. There were no tools or mechanisms to support staff appraisals, meaning that it was not easy to track staff performance. Yet some of the reasons given by the management for firing staff included poor performance. However, further inquiries about how that was determined showed that there was no documented evidence of the poor performance (Batti, 2014, p. 91).

Management contributes significantly to employee performance. The type of leadership and supervision strategies applied to subordinate staff affects organisational progression. When asked if there is support by the management to achieve their goals, one of the participants answered as follows:

Pule(7): p. 2:5: *"The supervisor yes but the management no"*.

The organisation's HR Manual (2018, p. 6-7) details performance and management support as *"...management seeks to create an environment of stability, harmony and peace where employees work professionally and effectively to achieve the vision and goals of the organisation. The manual sets standards for conduct and performance. It also outlines processes and procedures of implementation of the provisions contained therein"*.

The manual further clarifies that the organisation attracts and develops the most talented individuals who can implement its vision, constantly setting and meeting higher standards of excellence by rewarding performance, creativity and dedication. The organisation's HR Manual (2018, p. 6-7) policy commits managers or supervisors to providing on-the-job training and providing the necessary guidance to ensure that employees working under their supervision have the knowledge, skills and competencies to fulfil their daily tasks effectively to reach the performance objectives and standards agreed upon.

Pertaining to the participants' responses, the ideology in the manual seems not be maximised. The manual does not tabulate in a clear form the performance tools used by the organisation to reach the desired performance, and provides no details about the role played by the supervisor and the supervisee.

The government of Lesotho retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 29) states that supportive supervision is closely associated with performance management. Effective supervision reinforces the concept that management is getting things done through people:

*“More recently supervision is viewed as a mechanism for bringing about change and improvement. Direct supervision leads to improved motivation, work satisfaction, performance improvement and better quality of care in remote settings, trust, concern and support from the manager and/or supervisor is a key driver of stay-or-leave decisions by health workers”.*

The retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 30) by the Lesotho government demonstrates the concept of management support as closely related to supervision performance. With a broader scope, the concept is primarily focused on the level of the individual health workers. Management, thus, pays attention to individuals, demonstrates potential, and plays an important role in improving quality care and motivating workers. Trust and support amongst co-workers, as well as supervisors and managers, is an important factor which influences an individual to stay in a job, two elements that could affect the retention of employees (Kaila, 2012, p. 341).

#### **4.8 THEME 4: DATA ON SALARY STRUCTURES AND BENEFITS**

According to Watson (2012, p. 2), salary and job security tops the list of what people want when considering taking a job, followed by opportunities to grow their career and learn new skills. Matindo, Pekur and Karodia (2015, p. 104) agree with this notion by stating that health sector employees prioritise better salaries, better allowances and benefits as part of staff retention.

Puseletso (6): p. 2:6: *“Really I think the salary structures and the benefits that I have unless I love the organisation too much are really good”.*

Pule (7): p. 3:3: *“I think it is fair according to the position that one is hired for”.*

However, there are multiple factors influencing employees to leave or stay with an organisation. Ngulube (2010, p. 31) illustrates that unreasonable workloads are

some of the reasons for staff dissatisfaction in health institutions, due to the shortage of skilled workers due to migration, the highly increasing burden of disease, and low salary levels, leaving employees facing long hours of work, with an increase in the number of patients to attend to.

Relebohile (2): p. 3:10 & 12: *“With the work I’m doing, I think, is not enough for me, but for other people, who are getting a different salary from mine, like I said, I think is just right...”*

Mihai (2014, p. 248) states that employees have extrinsic motivation, such as incentives and raising salaries. Most participants are, however, conflicted between the salaries and the benefits provided by the organisation. Their satisfactory expression with the benefits drowns out their dissatisfaction with their salaries. For example:

Thabo (3): p. 2:6 & 8: *“Well like I said there is a discrepancy about our salary structure... I think the benefits are good, looking at some of the NGOs”.*

Palesa (15): p. 7:2 *“The benefits I will say that the PSI just from what I heard outside is good in terms of the benefits looking at the provident fund but salary really looks like we are not there because the main reason that you can find especially from counsellors yah sometimes you may find that they are going to the same salary but the will say yah but we are missing on the provident fund”.*

Because of the continuously evolving world of work, organisations should keep up with the trends by improving their pay and benefits to remain relevant in the market. One of the practices pertains to payments and benefits that serve as an important means of encouraging employees to stay and to adjust to organisations (Reiche, 2008, p. 6).

The organisation’s HR Manual (2018, p. 9) stipulates that the organisation is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment in which employees are valued, clients receive consistently high quality services, performance and contributions are rewarded, and any increase in salary is subject to the availability of donor funds. All employees shall be remunerated a basic salary in accordance with

salary scales approved by the Country Representative. Salary scales shall be subject to review, from time to time, and shall be adjusted at the discretion of the Country Representative. Mihai (2014, p. 248) argues that employees can be motivated by a salary raise. The way salary raises are managed by the organisation evidently does not meet the level of expectation.

The commencing salary of an employee appointed on an incremental scale shall normally be at the minimum of the scale. The Country Representative may determine a higher commencing salary or an applicable salary scale after duly considering the abilities, qualifications and experience of the employee or prevailing market forces. The granting of a salary increment within the same grade is, at all times, at the sole discretion of the Country Representative, and shall be based on the employee's good performance, relevant additional qualifications or additional responsibilities as may be assigned to them.

The organisational benefits are tabulated as follows: a provident fund, a medical aid scheme, a funeral group scheme, a guaranteed 13<sup>th</sup> cheque, an acting allowance, a gym membership allowance or purchasing gym equipment, all of which are subject to managers' approval (The organisation HR manual, 2018, p. 10). The organisation benefits have shown to be competitive compared to other NGOs. This could give the organisation an added advantage against its competitors so as to retain its best talent.

For the government of Lesotho retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 33), other cadres, such as doctors and dentists, are significantly more likely than other health workers to cite income and incentives as a reason to migrate. Amongst the Lesotho health workforce, discriminatory incentives are generally regarded as demotivating by those who do not qualify for the incentives. A major concern cited by the managers are the discriminatory monetary incentives given by donor agencies to nurses caring for HIV/AIDS patients. This demotivates nurses who are not dealing with HIV/AIDS patients.

The retention strategy for the health workforce (2011, p. 33) further indicates that the equalisation of salaries between government and non-government health care providers has reduced the migration of workers between employers. Lesotho health workers generally see their salaries as insufficient to meet their individual and family

needs. An increase in a basic salary is generally believed to be important. According to the policy, a research exercise in 18 African and Asian countries revealed that around 90% of retention-related studies mentioned the importance of health worker salaries in terms of motivation. However, it was noted that financial incentives can only have an impact when combined with other incentives. Poor salary packages were found to be particularly demotivating, with health workers feeling that their skills were being devalued. The results from the prioritisation process for interventions related to financial incentives, are as follows (Retention Strategy for the Health Workforce, 2010, p. 25):

Table 4.4  
*Priority financial interventions*

SCORE	INTERVENTION	
HIGH	Review and increase allowances	Update allowances, e.g. hardship allowance, transport allowance, study allowance, etc.
	Equalise benefits	Equalise benefits between government and non-government health care providers.
	Review and increase incentives	Update incentives in an effort to retain health workers, e.g. house loans, car purchase loans, etc.
	Equalise salaries	Equalise salaries between government and non-government health care providers.
	Salary based on scarce and critical skills	Reward scarce skills, i.e. occupations for which there is a scarcity of qualified and experienced people.
	Incentives for new recruits	Introduce a special package of incentives for students after they graduate and enter into service.
	Eliminate discriminatory financial incentives	Do away with incentives which only apply to certain health worker categories.
	Higher salaries	Increase basic salary level.
	End-of-service payments	Issue generous pay-outs at end of service.
	Review and increase insurances	Provide insurances, e.g. life insurance, medical cover, accident cover, etc.
	Performance-based pay	Supplement basic salary by a performance-based top-up, e.g. bonuses.
LOW	Allow dual practice/income	Improve income levels of health workers by allowing them to take on second jobs, e.g. running a private practice.

According to Table 4.4 above, the government has prioritised the adjustment of the allowances of government health workers, such as transport and study allowance, to equalise government benefits and salaries with that of the NGOs to prevent the high migration of health workers from government entities to non-government institutions. The table further depicts rewarding scarce skills, generous pay-outs, and performance-based pay, such as bonuses, as a means of financial retention of staff.

As reviewed in literature, more employees are inclined towards financial incentives than others. Therefore, the government might manage to retain the majority of its staff if the policy is implemented. However, the notion to match the financial incentives with that of NGOs could be an excruciating and costly stretch for the government, as the NGOs have bigger financial muscles than the government has. In addition, the high pay is based on the quality and quantity performed by NGO employees. Most NGOs are project-based and non-pensionable, while their government counterparts hold permanent contracts. Therefore, a comparison and an equalisation of the two fields could be unwarranted.

#### **4.9 THEME 5: RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Janjua and Gulzar (2014) are cited in Sutanto and Kurniawan, (2016, p. 378) as stating that fair recruitment significantly affects employee retention. The average recruitment of employees in an organisation follow the same recruitment system, with differences only relating to the process, decision-making responsibility for recruitment and employment packages, whether in the public or private recruitment agencies. Most participants felt confident in the recruitment processes of employees:

*Teboho(4): p. 2:3: "Yes, I can say it is fair because there are positions that will be advertised and people will be applying and then selected".*

*Neo(5): p. 3:5: "That one I give you 100%."*

*Karabo (12): p. 4:3: "Well apparently yes. I don't complain about our recruitment process. I have seen most of the positions being externally advertised and I've seen the department quite often giving opportunities for promotions for the internal staff, and where there is not relevant expertise*



*then we go outside to seek out people with relevant expertise as that is required.”*

Gering and Conner (2002, p. 41) add that retention costs also include recruitment, training and development. They (Gering & Conner, 2002, p. 42) further advise that to reduce turnover, managers should show a genuine interest in their employees' development and success. Most participants expressed their concerns over the organisational training and development policy and its implementation.

Palesa (15): P. 4:5: *“I will say no, really I think it’s just a policy which is there, yet you don’t really see its implementation. As would be expected, at least at the beginning of the year, we should have that training plan for each department to say these are the things on which we should be trained”...I don’t know but I saw that maybe managers were engaged; otherwise, really because there are some even from the managerial level who have never attended any training, whether it is because of the departmental needs that really... really we don’t know but I think we need to engage managers that’s that. If anything comes up at least we can put responsibility to managers to say but we gave you chance you didn’t bring anything”.*

Thato (14): p. 5:4&7: *“The organisation does not offer the policy; instead, we develop staff in areas where they want to improve what we normally do is to ensure that they do what is relevant to their job then will support them by subsidising them with certain amount of money if their matter is approved...There is a performance appraisal at the PSI that’s a tool used though like I said, there is too much work following, it up means if we have 300 people you need time to go through all their appraisals to ensure that employees have set their goals”.*

Thabo (3): p. 2:10: *“As for the management, no like I said earlier, there are no training and development facilities at all.”*

The organisation’s HR Manual (2018, p. 8) explains its recruitment in terms of the contract the employee possesses: a fixed term contract sets forth the start and termination dates, and it automatically terminates on that date and no notice is

required from either party. A temporary contract is a form of contract entered into only when the work is of a temporary nature, and the contract will, therefore, be brought to an end upon completion of the specific task or internship contract. Depending on availability of funds and operational requirements, students or graduates will be engaged for internship and voluntary work.

The organisation's HR Manual (2018, p. 44) tabulates the recruitment process as follows:

- The organisation shall exercise fair and transparent recruitment, selection and placement process.
- There shall be no discrimination at any point in the process of recruitment.
- All employment contracts shall be fair and comply with provisions of national labour laws.
- The organisation will not employ children of 18 years and below.
- The organisation will attempt to offer employees market-related remuneration packages and benefits.
- Standards of performance shall be set for all employees and such standards shall be reasonable and achievable.
- The organisation shall provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment. High regard and concern shall be given to employees with special needs and disabilities.
- Cultural diversity between different groups of employees shall be upheld.
- The organisation will attempt to employ measures that are meant to develop employees and ensure advancement and succession within the organisation in consideration of funding and project timelines.
- In consideration of the nature of the services provided by the organisation, the organisation will provide employees with basic work tools and office facilities.

The organisation asserts that it is

*"...committed to developing the career potential for its employees who have demonstrated commitment to their work and the success of the*

*Organisation. Developing and expanding employees' knowledge, skills and competencies could take place on an informal level (internal training courses and on-the-job training) as well as formal level (attending courses or enrolling for a degree/diploma)”* (The organisation HR manual, 2018, p. 29).

The Human Resources function is divided into transactional and strategic tasks. Transactional tasks include recruitment and training (Batti, 2014, p. 89). Failure to meet these strategic needs may cause high staff turnover in the organisation. The participants have showcased that the organisation has training and development as a policy but it is not exercised. The responses have further shown that even managers are not benefiting from the policy. Lukwago *et al.* (2015, p. 279) specify that career development, opportunity for higher levels of responsibility, training and development programmes are some of the motivators of employees or are seen as decisive factors to stay or leave the organisation.

Some of the challenges facing the attraction and retention of health workers include the perceived disparities between the terms and conditions of service in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Ministry of Public Services by the health workers (the Retention Strategy for the Health Workforce, 2010, p. 24). As such, there is a need for an independent statutory body, responsible for all health workers in the country. The functions of this body will include:

- Keeping track of the trends, both nationally and internationally, in health worker recruitment, retention and deployment and devising proactive strategies to protect Lesotho from a shortage of health workers;
- Responsibility for all public health workers in Lesotho, regardless of where they are deployed;
- Determining the terms and conditions of service of the health workforce;
- Responsibility to attract, recruit, deploy and retain health workers throughout the Lesotho public health sector; and
- Responsibility for devising sound career advancement strategies, including the continuing professional development programmes, in collaboration with the

relevant professional structures, promotion procedures/processes and feedback mechanisms.

The results from the prioritisation process for recruitment-related interventions for the retention policy are given in the following table.

Table 4.5:  
*Priority recruitment-related Interventions*

SCORE	INTERVENTION	
HIGH	Establish statutory body for HRH	Create a body responsible for all health workers, keeping track of recruitment trends, retention, career advancement, etc.
	Establish 'rural pipeline'	Establish and nurture linkages between health department and rural schools and colleges; then follow through with a recruitment drive.
	Fixed-term rural posting	Agree on a fixed-term contract in rural areas.
	Targeted local recruitment	Recruit trainees from remote areas and assign them placements close to their original locality.
	Attract Diaspora	Put in place measures to 'attract back' health professionals who have migrated out of the country.
	Task shifting, skilled substitution	Train certain cadres of health workers to provide additional services; delegate tasks to less specialised health workers.
	Expert patients	Train patients to assist at clinic level, with tasks like filing, taking vital signs and counselling patients.
	Rotational locum system	Allow staff to work additional shifts with pay within their duty station.
	MOPS/MOHSW special contracting arrangements	Introduce an innovative contracting system, with a yearly quota of health worker positions for which candidates apply.
	Targeted recruitment drives	Recruit individuals from specific locations.
	Re-employment of retired professionals	Attract retired health workers from inside or outside the country.
	Retention of foreign doctors	Put in place measures to halt the out-migration of foreign doctors.
	Compulsory rural service	Obligate health workers to serve in a rural

<b>LOW</b>		location for a period of time.
	Bonding	Obligate health workers to work for government after initial training has been completed.
	Employment of international volunteers	Recruit doctors, nurses and other professionals through international voluntary organisations.
	Prohibit poaching by donors	Combat poaching practices of professionals by donor agencies.
	Age-specific deployment to rural areas	Send older health workers, with less need for a diverse social life, to the rural areas.
	Retention of academic certificates and transcripts	Withhold qualification certificates to ensure graduates work for government for a period of time.

The recruitment policy table suggests attracting back professionals who have migrated to other countries to improve service delivery in the health sector. It could be a realistic and attainable goal to deploy back the said professionals in the country. It would, however, appear to be a milestone to attract back professionals operating in the first-class countries with a better pay and better facilities. The policy further suggests recruiting employees from specific areas who might bring foreign skills to the workplace to diversify talents. However, this can attract nepotism, favouritism, lack of an affirmative action and complete bias. It sees it fit to attract back retired staff and employ international volunteers of nurses and doctors who will equip the locals with health care from the international masterpiece. The table also shows engaging age-specific deployment and withholding certificates as a suggested method to retain staff. As much as this can influence employees to work for the government, it may be a demotivating move for the employees, who might alternately perform poorly or not reach their highest-level capacity of productivity.

According to the Retention Strategy for the Health Workforce (2010, p. 2), the Ministry of Public Service (MOPS) is, through job evaluation and salary survey processes, committed to offering competitive remuneration for public sector workers; to enhancing workers' motivation, and, thus reducing the high staff turnover. As an integral part of this effort, the MOPS developed the Training and Development Policy in 2006. This policy was intended to provide general guidelines in the management

and administration of the training and development of public officers to ensure cost-effectiveness in the development, utilisation and retention of human resources in the public sector in accordance with national priorities' (Human Resource Policy Manuals, 2006). The retention strategy does not in itself possess a training and development policy. It is based on the policy developed by MOPS. The research for the human resource policy manual of 2006 came to a fruitless end, as the researcher could not find it in the national archives, or on the internet, and the ministry could not produce the document when requested.

#### **4.10 THEME 6: TALENT MANAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION**

Motivation plays an important role in employee satisfaction and employee performance. This study believes that analysing employee needs and fulfilling them will result in organisations achieving their goals. According to Sandhya and Kumar (2011, p. 1778), employee motivation is one of the important factors that influence employers to improve employees and organisational performance. Khan and Kumar (2013, p. 67) state that the presence of qualified and motivated employees is essential.

Qenehelo (13): p. 1:4: *"Yes, which are in line with the organisational goals. I'm very an independent person; I do and go beyond what is expected of me. I surpass the expectations of the organisation. I'm somebody who am innovative; I think out of the box, I think all those characteristics are there because I'm motivated, a person not motivated will do within their scope and not go beyond, I'm self-driven and when yourself-driven is due to motivation."*

Palesa (15): p. 1:6: *"For me I will just be open, since I join the organisation in 2012 until now this has always been a learning forum for me, so I think I can say in terms of engagement I'm always part of the management where decisions are being made and always being consulted for evidence, especially when they should make some decisions based on evidence; so I would say I'm really motivated and a part of the donor meetings; it is really motivating to be part of such meetings..."*

As noted earlier, Akeyo and Wezel (2017, p. 50) claim that many contemporary authors have defined the concept of motivation as the psychological process which gives a behavioural purpose and direction, a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific and unmet needs. It is an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need, and enhances the will to achieve. Motivation is, therefore, central to individual needs and satisfaction. The following are illustrative:

Thabo (3): p.5:3: *"Money is not the only motivating factor, quarterly just organise the wellness programme. Wellness I mean take part in sports, staff retreats or staff burnouts, staff recognition. Staff is not being recognised hence why most of them are leaving the organisation."*

Teboho (4): p. 3:5: *"The nature of the work, helping vulnerable people because when you are doing HIV testing we reach those people who are vulnerable who need help so that motivates one to come to work every day even the issue of the salary even though it is not that good it motivates."*

Leseli (11): p. 9:10: *"Well I know very well that I will be going to work, do all my duties but what one thing that motivates me is that on the 25th I know very well that I will be getting my salary you see."*

Organisations should attract the best talent. An organisation should be viewed as the 'best place to work'. A high employee-retention rate implies that the organisation is an employer of choice (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011, p. 40). There is a growing realisation amongst the companies that hiring and retaining talented employees, especially the senior management, will surely shape the future of the business (Dries & Pepermans, 2007a, as cited in Sarmad, 2016, p. 176). However, most participants believed that their talents were not utilised by the organisation, as shown below:

Mpho (1): p. 2:9: *"Not that much because if they were maximised I could have been asked what other things I could do for the organisation"*.

Relebohile (2): p. 5:2: *"No, because even if you want to move from one department to another you will be denied any such an opportunity to do that"*.

Retšelisitsoe (9): p. 8:6: *"No, not at all. I think they are not even making a good use of it. I know I am somebody who can be creative. You remember*

*the first point you asked me whether I am satisfied to work here, I mentioned that I hate working in an environment whereby there is too much control on how I should do the work”.*

The donor-funded organisation that is the focus of this study, mainly focuses on employees achieving the set targets being compensated in monetary terms (Nwokocha, 2012, p. 101). This can easily cause the employer to overlook talented employees, and focus on the desired outcomes, which may affect recruitment negatively:

*Thato (14): p. 7:6: “Honestly it’s a difficult issue talents can be identified when hiring but like I have shown we have a lot of work and we are not many we just follow the process it’s not really about going in depth to produce quality work. During interviews that is then you realise that Miss Lisebo has specific skills and I will use them elsewhere. You might be hired as an HR but acquires financial skills and other skills from other department which they can utilise.”*

The organisation’s HR Manual (2018, p. 7) stipulates that the organisation will attract and develop the most talented individuals who can implement the vision of the organisation, constantly setting and meeting higher standards of excellence by rewarding performance, creativity and dedication. The organisation talks only about attracting and rewarding talents with no specific guidelines or strategies stipulating how this should be done.

Organisations should employ talent management processes which involve instituting initiatives to utilise and develop the capacity of personnel. The local NGOs can develop a simple human resource information database which they can use to record and store data related to their employees. This will help in tracking the availability of skills that are not being utilised, and those that are lacking and should be developed (Batti, 2014, p. 93). Training and benefits attract the best talent to meet the organisation’s needs, and a high employee-retention rate implies that the organisation is the employer of choice (Gering & Conner, 2002, p. 40).

The government of Lesotho Retention Strategy for the Health Workforce (2010, p. 31) constitutes well-defined career paths and promotion opportunities which are key



to health workers' motivation. Conversely, the lack of these leads to health workers feeling trapped in their positions, which makes them more susceptible to the 'pull factors' of migration. The health workers in Lesotho indicate that although there is a promotion system in place, career opportunities are limited. This is attributed to the absence of a systematic performance appraisal system. Health workers serve in the same position for years without any promotion or increment. Considering current trends and priorities, the main focus of interventions among health workers at district and community levels, is to determine who will be affected by the process of decentralisation.

The retention policy does not demonstrate talent management in its sequence, neither does it mention motivation as a subject. Talent management is a complex discipline, encompassing a wide array of programmes and processes. For such initiatives to be successful, a concrete talent strategy should serve as a constant guide, providing a direction for how the organisation will acquire, develop, and retain employees, while always reflecting the key business goals of the organisation.

Successful talent management policies embed their talent strategy into the overall strategic planning process, integrating individual programmes and practices to ensure they are all driving towards the same set of objectives. To gain a better understanding of the state of talent management, suggests five specific areas: talent strategy, workforce planning and talent acquisition, capability development and performance, leadership and high potential development and talent analytics.

It is imperative to put a good talent management strategy in place to retain the best talent. Sinha and Sinha (2012, p. 151) indicate that talented employees have more choices than ever before. As such, they are likely to leave if they are not satisfied with their employer or unrewarding job content, thereby increasingly losing individuals with such perceptions. It is, thus, important to understand the new work and motivation of today's employees, as organisations now find themselves competing to attract and retain employees based on the meaningfulness of their jobs (Sinha & Sinha, 2012:151).

#### **4.11 OBSERVATIONS AND RECORD OF FIELD NOTES**

The researcher used ethnographic theory to conduct the research. Observations and recorded field notes regarding the various sites of the organisation and the results were as follows:

##### ***HTS sites***

- Counsellors arrived as early as 6 a.m. to work.
- The supervisors would be seen early at the sites to administer ease of movement and shared resources such as cars and tents.
- HTS staff would be seen having meetings before their departure to the field, discussing areas to work from that day, the performance and other prevailing issues.
- HTS staff would sit and have tea for 30 to 40 minutes every morning before going to the field.
- Drivers would be seen sitting in cars and waiting for staff to load their tents and back packs in the cars while they heat the cars.
- In several instances, counsellors would be seen fighting for work equipment in the storage room, either chairs or the weight scales.
- Some staff members would be writing reports and submitting them to their supervisors in the morning.
- Some staff members would be seen packing and unpacking their medical work equipment in the backpacks.
- At around 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. staff would be seen arriving from the field.
- Staff would be seen unloading their work equipment, such as tents and backpacks to the store room.
- Staff would sit and write reports to submit to their supervisors, while others would drink tea and others would complete administrative forms such as leave or incidental reports.
- A lot of noise would be made by staff when they arrive in the morning and when they arrive in the evening.

### ***Nurses and counsellors' field work***

- Counsellors and nurses would unload their tents and backpacks from the organisation's vehicles and pitch the tents.
- Some nurses and counsellors would stand in the sun for 15 to 20 minutes before they pitched the tents (The researcher assumes when it is cold the nurses and counsellors sometimes feel cold and feel the need to warm themselves in the sun before they could work).
- The majority of the counsellors and nurses would pitch a tent and seek a nearby shady spot to wait for clients to approach the tent.
- Most of the counsellors would be seen playing with their work tablets while they waited for the clients to come for the services.
- A relatively few nurses and counsellors would be seen approaching the passing public to lure them into the tent to offer them the services being provided (in HTS terms this act is called mobilisation).
- In populated areas such as towns, a line of people seeking services would be seen outside tents. At this point, the referral team would also be seen taking other members of the public who have been served by the nurses and counsellors to the hospital facilities. (The researcher learned that when this happens a person has been found to be HIV positive and is accompanied to the facility to be put on medication or initiated on anti-retroviral drugs).
- In places where two tents are pitched at the same place or area, counsellors and nurses would be seen chatting outside the tents with the paired staff member.
- Field workers confirmed that they felt safe when they were in pairs rather than when they were placed individually, especially in remote villages where they sometimes had to work.
- Some nurses and counsellors confirmed that they found it entertaining to be on their mobiles or work tablets playing games or on social media while waiting for clients when they had nothing else to do.
- Sometimes when the weather was cold; raining, windy or snowing, nurses and counsellors would be seen shivering in tents because of the cold, or waiting with

folded tents for the car outside to pick them up, or simply seek shelter in nearby places while they wait to be picked up.

- Most employees confirmed that they dreaded the cold weather because they could catch a cold or suffer from deteriorating health, while others liked the cold weather because it meant that they were not going to the field or they did not need to work.
- They ate lunch boxes or bought food from street vendors.
- No toilet, water or proper food facilities.

### ***VMMC site***

- Every time the researcher went to do a site visit for observations a report of the visits had to be presented by HIV Senior Mentor at the site to the hospital administration.
- There are heavily armed soldiers at the main gate of Makoanyane barracks; about four (4) per shift (the shift lasts about 12 hours).
- At the main door, there was constantly a soldier to whom the researcher reported to before proceeding for observations.
- The check-up rooms the nurses used for patients were relatively small.
- The nurses shared space with nurse soldiers.
- Most check-up rooms were partitioned with closets to create more space.
- On the days that the researcher visited the site there had been a minimum flow of patients.
- The nurses were seen idling and chatting in the absence of patients.
- Counsellors made several calls to follow up with their clients.
- Counsellors were frequently out of the offices to make home visits to their clients.
- The HIVST Senior Mentor would make regular visits to the nurses' rooms for supervisory visits.
- Nurses and counsellors were observed arriving at 7 a.m. at their work stations and leaving at 4 p.m.

- During lunch hours, the nurses and counsellors would be seen joining the military staff in the canteen for lunch.
- The nurses and counsellors would be seen in military cars that delivered staff home from work.
- Participants hardly visited the headquarters.

### ***Headquarters' site***

- Staff start arriving from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Most employees go to the kitchen to make tea or breakfast before they start work.
- Employees are formally dressed and well groomed.
- The office space is partitioned and air conditioned.
- Some employees bring lunch from home, while others prefer ordering their lunch from local restaurants.
- The employees would be seen sometimes attending to their personal errands in town during office hours. (The employees confirmed that they sometimes run personal errands to pay their bills or shop, as some stores or services would have closed when they leave work at 5 p.m.).
- Regular weekly meetings were held in the organisation's two boardrooms, with HR functions, such as inductions or interviews, or programme department meetings, such as donor meetings. Sometimes organisations that are in partnership with the health organisation would be invited for meetings. In most of the functions that were held, food and refreshments would be provided to the participants and all corporate services staff.
- Employees were seen to celebrate birthday parties, or any other celebratory function, such as women's day or father's day. (The researcher identified that the support staff enjoy celebrations that are mostly funded from their own pockets.)
- There is ease of movement in transportation as most employees have their own cars to drive or the organisation's cars are readily available in the compound to transport staff on work trips. (Some employees were seen being delivered to places for their personal reasons, this is called a 'lift'.)

- Employees arrive at work on time, while others may stay later, depending on their deadlines and report deliveries. When employees work beyond working hours, they are compensated with time that they can take at their leisure. The employees are also provided transport home when they work overtime.
- There are security officers at the main gate who control non-staff entrance into the compound. (These people are searched and registered in the log book before they are approved entrance.)
- All employees, including those from the sites have to have employee tags before they are allowed into the building. The researcher has confirmed with the security officers that employees without tags are not allowed into the building, even if are known to be employees.

### ***Management***

- Management team arrived, and worked the same hours as their supervisees.
- Management brought their own food to work to store in the work fridge, or ordered their lunch from local restaurants.
- Management would be seen attending regular management meetings or holding departmental meetings with their staff.
- Some managers were seen working from home, even though it is not a regular event.
- Most managers share office space with their employees.
- Managers are sometimes seen working late; when this happens food and beverages are provided. Management is delivered home when they work after hours and are provided with compensation time.

### **4.12 CENTRAL STORY LINE**

In accordance with the themes, observations and field notes discussed, the researcher found the physical working environment of the organisation to be wanting, in terms of location and operational requirements. There were long working hours for the field employees with limited resources.

As one of the sites, the headquarters is the environment that was found to be conducive to the support staff due to having well balanced workspaces and resources. The HR Manual depicted the work environment as one that ensured various security and safety measures for both the employer and employees. These include fire extinguishers, confidentiality, precautions and procedures, all of which are intended to offset any danger. The retention strategies for the health workforce has been regarded an ideal workplace environment for proper supervision, productivity, management support, timely dissemination or communication of newly made decisions and any other relevant information.

In terms of decision-making processes, only senior officers confirmed being included by the management. The other lower-ranking officers saw decisions being made for them. The organisation's HR Manual is silent about the inclusion of all employees in decision-making processes. Disciplinary proceedings of the organisation and the grievance procedures are the only proceedings that demonstrate employee inclusion. The health workforce retention policy mentioned centralised decisions as key to public health operations. This was shown in staff recruitment, supervision and termination of employment. The rural areas in Lesotho were more decentralised in decision-making processes, resulting in higher levels of staff motivation and more productivity was witnessed.

Most of the employees who portrayed good performance output attributed their outstanding performance to support from the supervisors. The organisation, through its HR Manual, denotes its desire for high-performing staff but does not explain clearly how this is to be achieved. Conversely, the retention policy suggests good management and individual supervision as the ideal route to maximise performance at the workplace.

The organisational participants found the organisational benefits lucrative compared to the marked in which it operates, while the salary was dissatisfactory. There was a few participants who found both the salary and benefits unattractive, causing them to keep looking for employment elsewhere. The health workforce strategy saw more doctors and dentists attracted to seeking employment abroad or elsewhere, mainly because of the unfulfilling salaries and incentives. It was difficult for the health ministry to compete with the international market which had more financial muscle.

The health ministry has further portrayed actions of discrimination when distributing incentives, with higher-level positions mainly benefitting doctors, as compared to nurses with lower-level positions. However, the ministry apparently showed an aspiration to equalise their salaries with the NGO sector.

The research showed that most participants were optimistic and enthusiastic that the organisation considered the policy as not ideal. The participants have showcased that the organisation has a training and development policy, which is, however, not implemented. The responses further showed that even managers are not benefiting from the policy. The retention policy emphasised recruiting employees from the first-world countries, who might have foreign skills in order to diversify talent in the country.

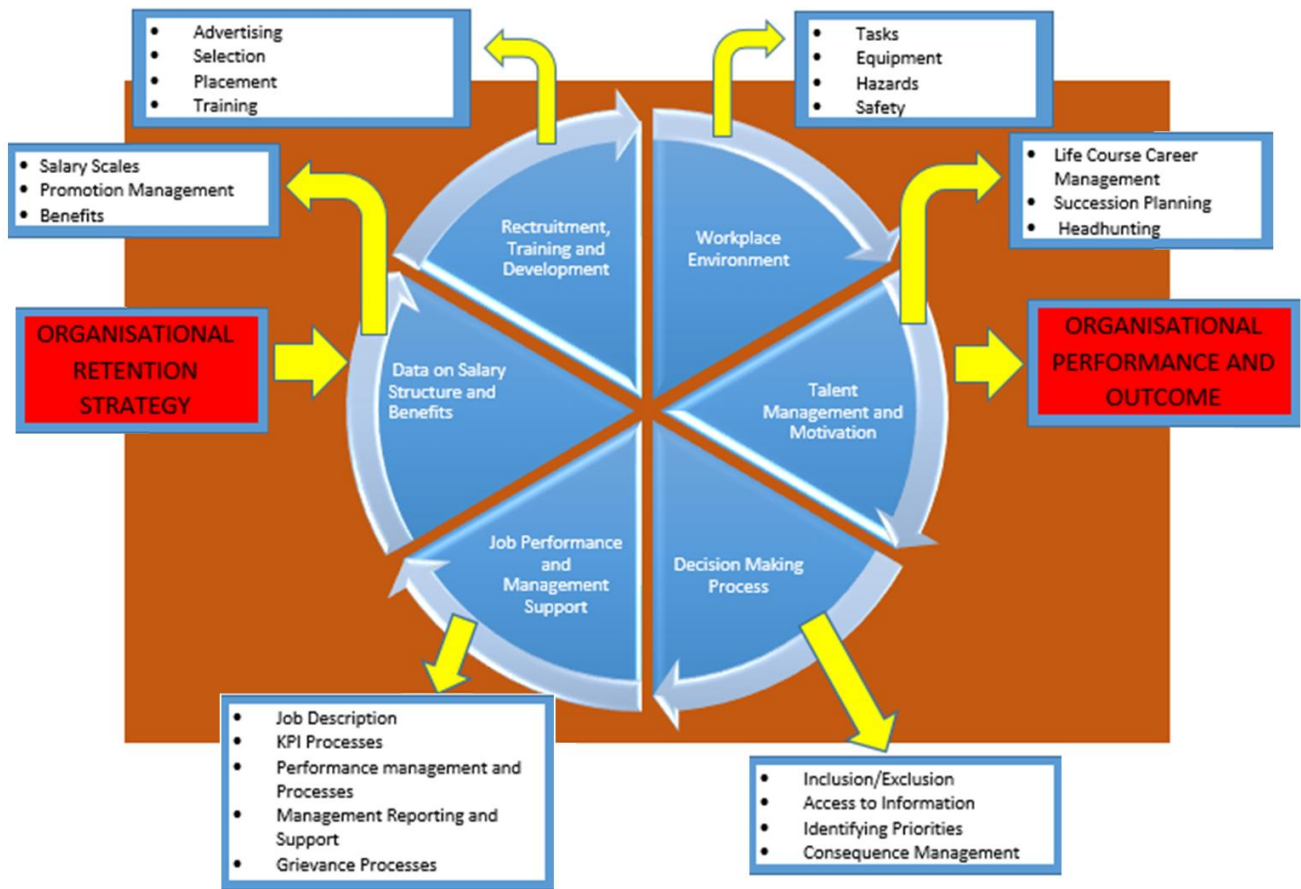
The research study found that today's business environment has become very competitive, thus making skilled employees the major differentiating factor for most organisations, both the public and private sectors (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009, p. 410). Gering and Conner (2002, p. 40) point to the literature on best practices related to the employers with the best advantage of retaining their employees and treating them as their most valued assets. Regardless of organisations' efforts to train, compensation plans, increased benefits to retain talent, health care organisations continue to experience high turnover rates.

Some participants viewed their talents as being maximised by the organisation. Others were not impressed with the organisation's attempt to utilise or recognise talent, while a few were caught in the middle with their responses.

The retention policy does not demonstrate talent management in its sequence. It does not mention motivation as a subject. The organisation only articulates attracting and rewarding talent without any specific guidelines or strategies in place.



Figure 4.1  
*Retention strategy cycle*



Source: Own compilation

#### 4.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings as derived from interviews, field notes, observations and documentary sources related to the selected participants of this study. The main research question, that is examining the challenges of staff retention with a focus on the HIV/AIDS-testing organisation as one of the NGOs in Lesotho, has been addressed as illustrated in this chapter. Guided by the research questions and objectives of this study, the findings were organised according to themes. These include the information from both document data sources and the result of the interviews with the selected participants. The following chapter summarises the main findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 4 presented the empirical findings of the study on the challenges of staff retention in the HIV/AIDS-focused NGO in Lesotho. This chapter concludes the study by presenting an overview of the study, and aligning the research questions with the empirical findings. The chapter further provides the contributions, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

### **5.2 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The study intended to investigate the challenges facing non-governmental organisations, specifically in retaining their human resources. Employees should be managed properly to maximise organisational efficiency and to ensure the optimal use of the resources. As such, employee retention has emerged as a vital issue for HRM, regardless of the type of organisational environment.

As earlier noted, the study set out with the following research questions in mind:

- What are the perceptions of the employees on staff retention in the organisation?
- What are the of perceptions of the management on retention of staff in the organisation?
- What recommendations can be made to human resource management on improving the retention of staff in the organisation?

The study had to achieve the following objectives: to find out how the organisation's employees perceive retention at the organisation; to find out how the organisation's management perceive retention at the organisation; to make recommendations on improving staff retention to the HRM of the organisation.

Organisations that successfully attract and retain key employees offer high compensation packages and a dynamic working environment (Nwokocha, 2012, p. 203). This is because every economy relies on the capacity, knowledge and competence of its human resources for economic development. The desired critical

measures for the retention of employees have, therefore, become a strategic factor in the sustainable competition amongst organisations.

The methodological orientation of this study has primarily been exploratory, given that to date, there has apparently not been any specific qualitative study conducted on staff retention focusing on health servicing NGOs in Lesotho. If the challenges of staff retention at the organisation are not resolved, with the turnover rate of 27% in the last two years (Population Services International - Lesotho Staff Records, 2017), the organisation would likely lose both human and financial resources. Such losses could be due to new recruitment, and the selection and training of new staff. Existing staff might find themselves demotivated with new hiring inconsistencies, lack of organisational commitment, burnout from doing routine work and poor job performance. If targets are not met, the donors would see no need to invest in the organisation, thus leading to a high rate of retrenchment or closure, as well as worsening the already ailing economy and deteriorating health sector of Lesotho.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE LITERATURE**

Like any other studies, this study has borne witness to some of the fundamental themes regarding staff retention in a given organisation. Such themes have thus drawn on the literature on staff retention as briefly discussed below.

**Psychological work environment:** A study conducted by Roelofsen (2002) showed that a conducive working environment increases work satisfaction, attendance and productivity (Akeyo & Wezel, 2017, p. 52). Further to that, the report of Firth *et al.* (2004, p. 6), indicating that experiences of job-related stress, lack of commitment in the organisation, and job dissatisfaction make employees quit. From the literature, it can thus be concluded that the psychological work environment needs to be considered to retain employees; thereby bearing witness to the need to identify the elements that drive employees to appreciate and be committed to their work. The psychological work environment has further has been proved vital in cases where employees are working under pressure, having to perform and grapple with workloads and decisions regarding the achievement of the expected work goals.

**Recruitment, training and development:** A fair recruitment process significantly affects employee retention. The average recruitment of employees in an organisation

might entail the same recruitment system, but different decision-making processes and responsibilities, and employment packages. Recruitment, whether concerned with public or private recruitment agencies, has noted that a poor employee retention will increase employee turnover (Janjua & Gulzar, 2014, as cited in Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2016, p. 378). Herzberg *et al.* (1959) view training and development programmes as providing an opportunity for career development that greatly motivates employees. It can therefore be concluded that it is important to hire the right people in the right positions to enable organisations to improve employee retention because inept employees lead to inept organisations. A high turnover rate will affect employee morale, employee relations and job security within the organisation.

**Compensation and reward system:** Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 89) argue that organisations cannot develop employee growth if employees are unpaid and unmotivated, as this causes a gap between employee inputs and their rewards. Money may be regarded as a powerful motivating force because it is linked directly or indirectly to the satisfaction of many needs, such that it can have an immediate and powerful, although not necessarily long-lasting effect (Armstrong, 2009, p. 191). Money can, therefore, be motivational in the right circumstances, though pay systems have to be designed properly and need to be perceived as fair and as equitable as possible. Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p. 414) add that employees, especially those with self-esteem and self-actualisation, are not necessarily interested in monetary rewards, but they may need recognition for their contributions towards achieving organisational goals and objectives. Aguenza and Som (2012, p. 89) believe that non-cash motivators may be more effective in the longer term than financial incentives. In conclusion, it is imperative for employers to identify motivators for their employees, as a range of different incentive strategies is desirable. Definitely, the combined effect of different types of rewards would make a deeper and longer lasting impact on the satisfaction and retention of staff.

**Job levels and performance:** Muir and Li (2014) see retention factors as subject to job levels or specifications, where each employee would be holding a different psychological contract with the organisation. For example, hourly workers are more likely to cite transactional retention factors than workers at higher job levels who are more likely to cite relational retention factors. According to Muir and Li (2014), it is

important to understand how companies can best retain high performers, as high performers are most likely to possess the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for the overall success of the organisation. However, every business may not wish to retain all the employees. Most organisations are concerned with retaining high performers who possess key and rare skills and knowledge needed to run the organisation (Ahmed & Azumah, 2012). It is the conclusion of this study that performance is key to retention. There is a significant need by NGO employers to identify employees who bring growth to the organisation, and they should standardise their retention strategy based on that. The retention strategy should then outline the asset employees. The objective is to retain top performers, develop and retain middle performers, turning them into near-top or top performers as far as possible, so as to replace the potentially lowest performers.

#### **5.4 INTERPRETATION FROM THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The study used motivation as an underlying theoretical framework for interpreting staff retention strategies. Motivation has been noted for the important role it plays in employee satisfaction and the ultimate employee performance. In the analysis of employee needs and their fulfilment, this study found that motivation assisted organisations in achieving their anticipated goals. All of the participants' views were isolated cases which generally resonated with the motivational theories reviewed in this study, with the researcher categorising the gaps and suggesting possible solutions.

As such, the motivation theories that were discussed in Section 2.3 included Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's two-factor theory, Equity theory, Expectancy theory, Organisational culture and the Psychological contract (Herzberg, 1959; Vroom, 1964; Venugopalan, 2007, p. 62; Msengeti & Obwogi, 2015, p. 3).

It became clear from the study of the motivation theories that employees have different expectations when they decide to join an organisation. Unmet or unfulfilled expectations may demotivate employees; alternatively, meeting their expectations can motivate employees.

The literature, semi-structured interviews and the empirical findings demonstrated that employees are motivated by various factors. While some are enticed by job level

and performance, others value a healthy environment or better benefits and salaries. Maslow's hierarchy of needs denotes hierarchy as influencing these particular factors, while Herzberg two-factor theory partly argues that the availability of a good environment may not necessarily be motivational, with its absence causing dissatisfaction.

Several employees expressed their demotivation due to unfair processes, for instance, favouritism and unfair internal recruitment and promotion by the supervisors and management. The participants asserted this process as greatly demotivating, thus making them lose interest in their jobs, which then led to poor results. The participants' view of injustice highlights the major concerns of the equity theory. The findings further suggest that the management or supervisors' treatment of employees can be comparable to that of the parent and the child within the organisation. The findings are therefore coherent with theory X in demonstrating close supervision of employees by the employer, as well as any mistrust between the two parties in an organisation.

## **5.5 ALIGNMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS**

As mentioned earlier, this study attempted to answer the following research questions: What are the perceptions of the employees on the retention of staff at the focal health organisation? What are the perceptions of the management on the staff retention at the health organisation? What recommendations could be made to the Human Resource Management to improve the retention of staff at the health organisation?

The findings of the study (see Chapter 4) echo the findings of previous studies (Chapter 4) on the challenges facing staff retention in NGOs. On this basis, most employees have reportedly been found to have limited working spaces at their workplace, some of which are characterised as a non-conducive working or operational environment. For instance, there is little consideration for the health and safety of employees, thus exposing employees to health hazards, and that result in high staff turnover. Discriminatory internal recruitment, clouded by favouritism from some supervisors, has caused low staff morale amongst the employees. The ideology of training, as well as a development policy, was found to be redundant,

leaving most employees with feelings of burnout from doing repetitive work without any refresher courses that allow them to learn new skills. Most employees that participated in the study expressed their desire to leave the organisation because of lack of career progress and regression.

The study's findings further revealed the employees' perceived exclusion from decision-making processes by the management in the organisation. Therefore, some participants perceived that management treated them like children considering their daily set targets, however, some employees felt that they were recognised and supported by their supervisors/management, while others felt that the support was lacking. Conversely, some managers admitted failing to support employees in their work performance. They admitted that supervising a number of employees is a tedious task, and this resulted in them giving less attention to each employee, which, in turn, has caused poor performance in their teams.

In addition, the employees viewed their monthly salaries as not being commensurate with their respective workloads. While observing that their salaries are frequently benchmarked against other NGOs in the same field and benefit from the same donors, the employees considered their employment within the framework of a demanding industry that deserved more lucrative incentives because of such an overworked environment. Interestingly, the management also expressed dissatisfaction with the benefits, such as medical aid cover and low salaries, provided the organisation. Some managers further attested to poor performance due to excessive workloads. Examples include poor recruitment systems typified by underperforming employees despite being closely supervised with many and time-consuming resources. Some managers confessed to experiencing a lack of capacity to retain the talent, and poor in-house implementation of policies within the organisation.

Finally, the findings reported that most employees generally continued to work for the organisation simply because they were earning a living. Most of them expressed their continued job retention within the organisation as a matter of survival in an environment of high unemployment in the country.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is quite apparent from the data gathered that employee retention is a crucial factor for organisations, NGOs and government sectors. The literature has shown efforts are being made to standardise a retention policy. This was demonstrated through the retention policies as seen in the organisation's HR manual and the retention strategy of the health workforce. However, with scant literature on the employment sector, entities have developed policies, albeit neglecting the analysis of their impact on the employees. This has created gaps and conflicts between the employer and the employee, with one being dissatisfied with the tedious work processes and the other demonstrating rebellious behaviour because of feeling exploited and taken advantage of.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that should the following recommendations be upheld by the organisation, it would minimise the gaps that were identified between the employer and the employees. The recommendations are as follows:

- The organisation should consider instructing the drivers load and offload field workers' equipment from the vehicles for the safety of female employees, especially pregnant women.
- The sites should be made user-friendly by having male and female toilets.
- For safety, the organisation should further provide transport for site staff who work late beyond office hours.
- Employees should be allowed to opt for either monetary or overtime compensation, depending on their individual preferences or interests.
- The health and safety of the field employees should be prioritised in terms of providing secure stations, water, food, toilets, shelter against heavy winds and rains, as well as frequent visitations to the VMMC sites by human resource personnel, as in other HTS sites.
- Managers should have enough office space for meetings with other managers, while giving their supervisees the freedom to work in their absence.
- Employees should be consulted regarding the decision-making processes on such issues as organisational targets, improving the organisational culture, as well as staff support mechanisms by supervisors within the organisation.



- The organisation should introduce a competitive salary structure with the industry so as to limit or dissuade employees from migrating to other organisations or competitors.
- To ensure fairness, transparency and good governance for any organisation, proper internal recruitment processes of employees should be established to avoid bias, dissatisfaction and gossip.
- Medical aid subsidies should be revised to include increased subsidy cover for immediate family members.
- Staff training and development policies should be strengthened so as to address the different needs and skills of employees, be they stress management, burnout, personal and professional skills, as well as providing subsidies for the tuition expenses of on-the-job training and employees' full-time studies.
- There should be regular studies to benchmark staff retention against the market to remain relevant in terms of staff needs and wants at the time.
- As opposed to what often occurs regarding government policies, staff retention policies should be continually revised to identify any gaps, and thereby keep abreast of and be relevant to current developments.

## **5.7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Staff retention has been widely researched, resulting in more emerging issues. Such newly acquired knowledge could impact on the retention theory as follows:

### **5.7.1 Theoretical contribution**

The theoretical contribution of the study regarding the challenges of staff retention could go beyond investigating the relationship between the employer and employees, thus expanding the existing body of knowledge by including the demographic background of employees, such as educational qualifications, job levels, job location, the age factor, and sex. The researcher further incorporated behavioural sciences into the study on the challenges of staff retention, with a focus on the NGOs in Lesotho. The study has thus found this as one of the new phenomena of staff retention, thereby contributing to the existing theories on staff retention, an aspect which could be applied by various NGOs, especially in Lesotho.

### **5.7.2 Applied contribution**

The study identified the key challenges and key determinants of staff retention in NGOs. The study may assist NGOs to establish new systems, policies and strategies so as to retain more staff and talent that may result in the desired expectations, depending on the composition of staff. The findings could also help the government of Lesotho to identify gaps in their staff retention policies and assist them to adjust their strategies in accordance with particular industries.

### **5.7.3 Methodological contribution**

Premised on the qualitative and ethnographic research, the researcher adopted a mixed-methods approach to the data collection on the challenges related to staff retention. This instrumentation allowed the researcher to collect data through observations, field notes, and semi-structured interviews, thereby collecting a wide spectrum of data from the personal work activities of the participants involved. Thematic analysis was used to categorise and interpret the data to address the research questions and objectives on the challenges facing the NGOs regarding staff retention.

## **5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Although various methods were used for the study, some limitations have been identified.

### **5.8.1 Methodological limitations**

A qualitative research method was used to investigate the challenges experienced by NGOs in staff retention. The structure and execution of a research project can be done differently, depending on the specific research design used, and that includes a qualitative design (Welman *et al.*, 2005, p. 78). Qualitative research allows a researcher to make fine distinctions and see ambiguities in the data. Qualitative methods also provide in-depth and open-ended research into observation of the way of being (Creswell, 2014).

As noted above, the study further used ethnography as a specific qualitative method of data collection. Ethnography brings into focus a sense of significance to the research field as it uniquely tells the stories of the participants in the real-life

contexts. It also helps the researcher to correlate participants 'understandings and behaviour (Goodson & Vassar, 2011, p. 3). It could, however, be acknowledged that using mixed-methods approaches could have yielded different results to that of the study as it would also highlight quantitative results. Different methods of data collection such as grounded theory or postmodernist theory if explored in the study would have yielded possibilities that ethnography in its components could not cover.

Snowball sampling was used as a tool to select participants from the different departments in the organisation. The managers from each department were asked to nominate prospective participants who would contribute to the study. According to Bryman (2004, p. 304), sampling in ethnographic research is frequently a snowball sampling process. Fifteen (15) selected participants including the management team meant that only three (3) people from each department were selected. The researcher thus noted that a different sampling method such as random sampling where participants had calculable and non-zero chance of selection might have offered different participants therefore possible different findings. It is further noted that a different sample size with more participants might have yielded different findings.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes and patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research, or to say something about an issue in focus. Other methods of data analysis such as content analysis which would have explored more than themes but words and concepts used.

### **5.8.2 Theoretical limitations**

The study was aligned with motivational theories that helped the researcher to explore the different variations of the theories that NGOs encounter in staff retention. Motivational theories helped the researcher to identify the determinants of the employer-employee relationships in achieving desirable goals. Using different principles of and approaches to staff retention could probably have yielded different results.

### **5.8.3 Contextual limitations**

The context of the study was limited to one of the NGOs in Lesotho. As such, excluding other industries, as well as government entities, might have impacted on the findings of the study. The findings could not be generalised to any other entities than the NGO under study.

## **5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Through the analysis of the study findings, the researcher identified several areas for further research. However, with the sample involving only 15 participants for this study, more areas of future research with larger samples could help to shed more light on the phenomenon.

Following the study focusing on the challenges facing staff retention in the HIV/AIDS-testing NGO in Lesotho, more areas such as the textile industry, that is the second largest employer in the country after the government, could be explored. As such, one of the recommendations is that the same study could be replicated in the public sector and government entities in Lesotho.

The methodological model was designed to follow a specific process in data collection. The retention strategy cycle through retention determinants was also developed to address staff retention challenges facing the NGOs. An area of future research could include exploring other models to expand the existing body of knowledge.

## **5.10 REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY**

As an HR practitioner, the researcher was motivated by the number of employees leaving the organisation. It was concerning to see employees leave the organisation, which is involved with testing HIV/AIDS, because of low benefits and salaries. The researcher strongly felt that benefits and salaries could motivate employees. It was surprising to discover that other organisations in the same industry were also struggling to retain their employees. The researcher, therefore, found the phenomena intriguing and of research interest.

While exploring the type of research to follow, it was found that quantitative and mixed-methods approaches were more frequently used than qualitative research methods. While the researcher was initially inspired to follow quantitative research methods for numeric data, because of being almost equally keen on people's stories, views and perceptions about the phenomena under study, she later changed the study to a qualitative design by default.

Undertaking a study in her own working environment, especially in the HR office, meant that the study brought about some mixed feelings amongst the participants, including colleagues and management. Even though ethical processes were clearly followed, the researcher's intentions for the study were questioned by some managers, who were reluctant to participate in the study. The participants believed that the study would directly affect their work by bringing changes to the organisation through their inputs.

The study helped the researcher to gain insight into the phenomenon under study which, otherwise, could have not been known by anyone sitting in an office. Even though the study took a long time, with the researcher struggling in some stages of the research to keep up the motivation to work extra hours on the study, she found interesting stories from the people in all of which the following slogan '*We are more than our jobs...*' could be heard.

## **5.11 CONCLUSION**

The study explored staff retention in one of the NGOs focusing on the testing of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho. It is essential for the organisation to formulate strategies and policies that address the needs of employees as people with a range of different individual lives. The literature that was reviewed for this study views salaries and benefits as one of the most primitive and redundant motivator approaches. As such, organisations should seek their own customised staff retention strategies which are specifically aligned with their mission and vision to achieve their goals.

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## ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

07 November 2017

Dear Ms L. Ramakatsa

NHREC Registration # : REC-240816-052  
CREC Reference # : 2017-CHS-026  
Student # : CREC -50296078

**Decision: Ethics Approval from 2  
07 November 2019 to 31  
October 2020**

**Researcher(s):** L. Ramakatsa  
50196078@mylife.unisa.ac.za

**Supervisor (s):** Dr.J.C. Diedericks  
012 429 2613  
diedejc@unisa.ac.za  
  
Prof Adèle Bezuidenhout  
012 429 3941  
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**CHALLENGES OF RETAINING STAFF IN NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS –  
THE CASE OF A HEALTH ORGANISATION IN LESOTHO..**

**Qualification: MCOM: Business Management**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 5 years.

*The Medium Risk **application was reviewed** by the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee on 03 October 2019 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision will be tabled at the next Committee meeting on 24 August 2017 for ratification*



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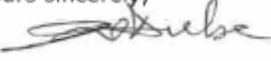
The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the CREC Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (31 November 2019). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **Student #: CREC-50296078** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

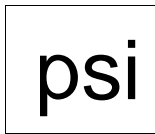
  
Signature :  
Dr. E.E Dube  
Chair : CREC  
E-mail: [dubeeen@unisa.ac.za](mailto:dubeeen@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 429-3892

 for   
Signature :  
Professor A Phillips  
Executive Dean : CHS  
E-mail: [Phillap@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Phillap@unisa.ac.za)  
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## ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



138 Moshoeshoe Road  
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P.O. Box 15863

Maseru 100  
Lesotho

28/06/2019

Mrs, L Ramakatsa  
P.O. Box 10250  
MASERU Lesotho

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT POPULATION SERVICES  
INTERNATIONAL-LESOTHO

Dear Mrs. Ramakatsa,

Reference is made to your letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 requesting approval to conduct a research at Population Services International Lesotho.

As PSI Lesotho, we are committed to the development of the career potential of our employees. Please therefore be advised that your request has been approved and all the best in your studies.

Looking forward to reading the full dissertation.

Best wishes,

Dr. Albert Machinda  
Country Representative- Population Services International Lesotho.  
TCI: (00266) 22 326 825

## ANNEXURE C: EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### EMPLOYEE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The Interview schedule is to determine challenges of retaining staff in non-governmental organisations – the case of a organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho. Your responses are seen as completely anonymous. The data will be used for research purposes only. It consists of 2 sections. Section A asks you to consider questions and statements relating to research while Section B is about your personal information. Read the question/statement carefully and respond the way you see fit. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, ring the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If you do not understand anything and would like more information, please ask.

- I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in verbal and / or written form by the researcher. YES / NO
- I understand that the research will involve Semi-Structured Interviews, audiotape and the interview will take 15 – 30 minutes to complete. YES / NO
- I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give an explanation. This will not affect my future care or treatment. YES / NO
- I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. YES / NO
- I understand that any audiotape material of me will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed on completion of your research. YES / NO
- I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with others ..... YES / NO

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form for my own information.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## SECTION A

1. Would you regard your workplace as an ideal place to work and do you feel like you are included in the decision making of the organisation?

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2. How do you feel about your job and your performance, and how would you rate your supervisors and management support in helping you reach your targets?

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3. What is your perception on the organisational salary structure, benefits and recruitment process, do you feel like they are fair and transparent?

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- 4. Are your skills and talents maximised and nurtured by the organisation and do you feel like the organisation gives all employees a fair chance when opportunities arise?**

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- 5. Why do you think people leave the organisation in high numbers and what would you suggest be done differently if given a chance to make certain the organisation keeps its employees?**

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6. What have you noticed the management do as a result of high staff turnover and what influences you the most to stay with the organisation?

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7. Do you perceive it easier to work in the organisation or outside?

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## SECTION B

1	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Senior Management	Middle Management	Officer	Assistant
2	<b>OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY</b>	Programs	Cooperate Services	Technical Services	
3	<b>AGE GROUP</b>	Below 30	31-40	41-50	Above 50
4	<b>GENDER</b>	Male		Female	
5	<b>HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT</b>	High School Certificate	Diploma/Undergraduate Degree	Masters Degree	PhD/Doctorate Degree
6	<b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION</b>	More than 6 months	1-3 years	5-10 years	11 years and above

## ANNEXURE D: MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### MANAGEMENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The Interview schedule is to determine challenges of retaining staff in non-governmental organisations – the case of a organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho. Your responses are seen as completely anonymous. The data will be used for research purposes only. It consists of 2 sections. Section A asks you to consider questions and statements relating to research while Section B is about your personal information. Read the question/statement carefully and respond the way you see fit. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, ring the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If you do not understand anything and would like more information, please ask.

- I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in verbal and / or written form by the researcher. **YES / NO**
- I understand that the research will involve Semi-Structured Interviews, audiotape and the interview will take 15 – 30 minutes to complete. **YES / NO**
- I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give an explanation. This will not affect my future care or treatment. **YES / NO**
- I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. **YES / NO**
- I understand that any audiotape material of me will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed on completion of your research. **YES / NO**
- I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with others  
..... **YES / NO**

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form for my own information.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## SECTION A

1. Describe your position and its contribution towards organisational goals

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2. Would you regard yourself as motivated and fulfilled that you reach your individual and organisational goals?

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3. What leadership set of skills do you prefer and why, do you think there is enough employee engagement in developing company goals and strategies?

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4. How does training and development policy address employee needs to perform accordingly and what measures do you take to make sure employees reach their set targets or perform according to standard?

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5. Are you satisfied with the organisation's culture? How does culture affect organisation's performance and growth?

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6. How do you identify talent and what processes do you follow to cultivate and keep it? If given an opportunity is there anything in particular you would like to change or improve to maximise talent in the organisation?

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**7. What is your perception on the salary and benefits structure? Would you regard the organisation as an employer of choice?**

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## **SECTION B**

1	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Senior Management	Middle Management	Officer	Assistant
.					
2	<b>OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY</b>	Programs	Cooperate Services	Technical Services	
.					
3	<b>AGE GROUP</b>	Below 30	31-40	41-50	Above 50
.					
4	<b>GENDER</b>	Male		Female	
.					
5	<b>HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT</b>	High School Certificate	Diploma/Undergraduate Degree	Masters Degree	PhD/Doctorate Degree
.					
6	<b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION</b>	More than 1 year	2-5 years	6-10 years	11 years and above
.					

## ANNEXURE E: TRANSCRIBERS' AND CO-CODER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

### TRANSCRIBER 1

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Project Title: Challenges of retaining staff in non- governmental organisations The case of a organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho.

Research Transcriber:

- ☒ I understand that all the material I will be asked to record and/or transcribe is confidential
- ☒ I understand that the contents of the consent forms, interview tapes, sound files or interview notes can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☒ I will not keep any copies of the information nor allow third parties to access them.
- ☒ I will delete all interview and other relevant files from my computer after transcription.

Research Transcriber Names: MPIITI MAKHAE

Research Transcriber Signature: M. Makhae

Date: 28/05/2019

Principal Researcher Names: LISEBO RAMATSA TSA

Principal Researcher Signature: 

28 May 2019

## TRANSCRIBER 2

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Project Title: Challenges of retaining staff in non- governmental organisations —  
The case of a health organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho.

Research Transcriber:



I understand that all the material I will be asked to record and/or transcribe is confidential



I understand that the contents of the consent forms, interview tapes, sound files or interview notes can only be discussed with the researchers.



I will not keep any copies of the information nor allow third parties to access them.



I will delete all interview and other relevant files from my computer after transcription.

Research Transcriber Names: MOKHALAHALI SFALE

Research Transcriber Signature: 

Date: 28 MAY 2019

Researcher Names: LISEBO ZOMALATSA

Researcher Signature: 

28 May 2019



## CO-CODER

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Title of Research Project: Challenges of retaining staff in non- governmental organisations — The case of a health organisation focusing on HIV/AIDS testing in Lesotho.

### Research Co-Coder Contract:

As a member of this research team I understand that I may have access to confidential information about study sites and participants. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of my responsibilities to maintain confidentiality and agree to the following:

☒ I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.

☒ I agree not to divulge, publish, or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons or to the public any information obtained in the course of this research project that could identify the persons who participated in the study,

☒ I understand that all information about study sites or participants obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorized persons any of this information, unless specifically authorized to do so by approved protocol or by the local principal investigator acting in response to applicable law or court order, or public health or clinical need.

☒ I understand that I am not to read information about study sites or participants, or any other confidential documents, nor ask questions of study participants for my own personal information but only to the extent and for the purpose of performing my assigned duties on this research project.

Research Co-Coder Names: Reitumetse Mokoaleli

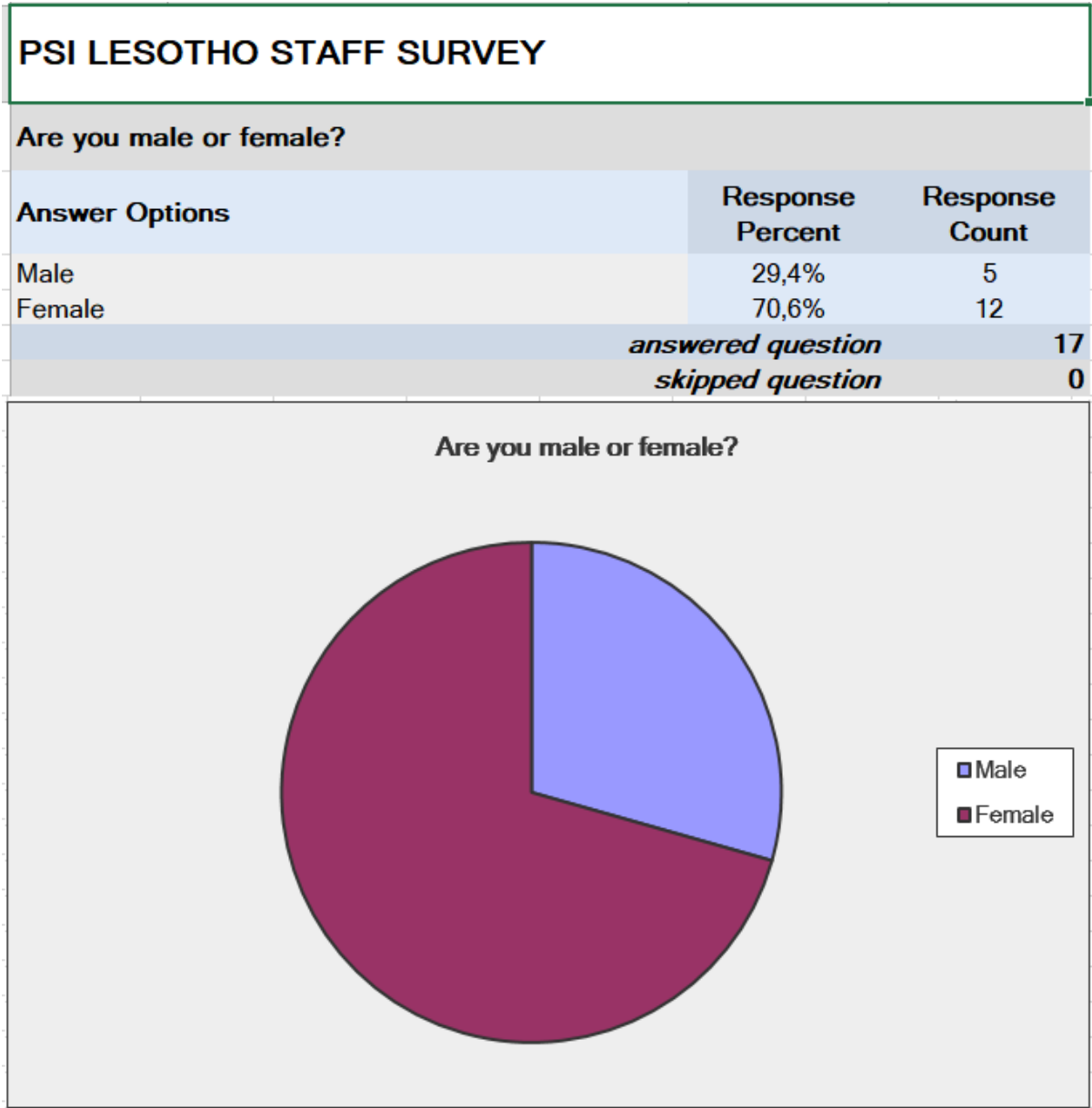
Research Co-Coder Signature: R. Mokoaleli

Principal Researcher Names: LISEBO ZAMACATSA

Principal Researcher Signature: 

28 May 2019

ANNEXURE F: PSI LESOTHO STAFF SURVEY



## **ANNEXURE G: THE ORGANISATION'S HR MANUAL**



HR Manual.pdf

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## **ANNEXURE H: LESOTHO RETENTION STRATEGY FOR THE HEALTH WORKFORCE**



Lesotho\_Retention\_Strategy.pdf

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